

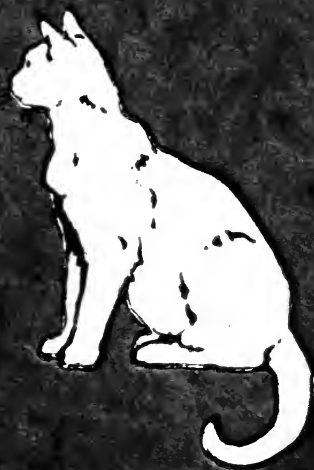
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THE GREAT SMALL CAT AND OTHERS

MAY E. SOUTHWORTH



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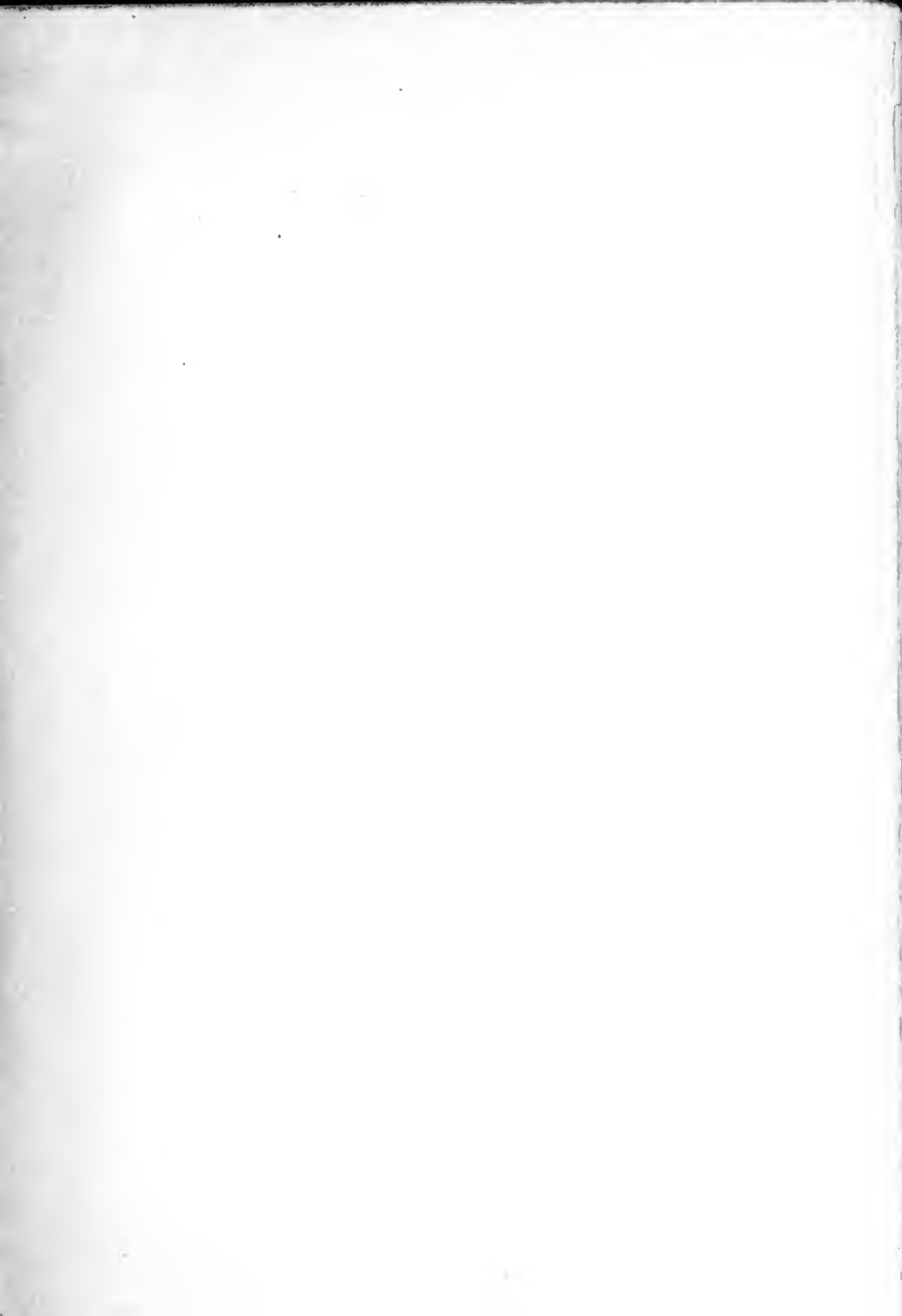


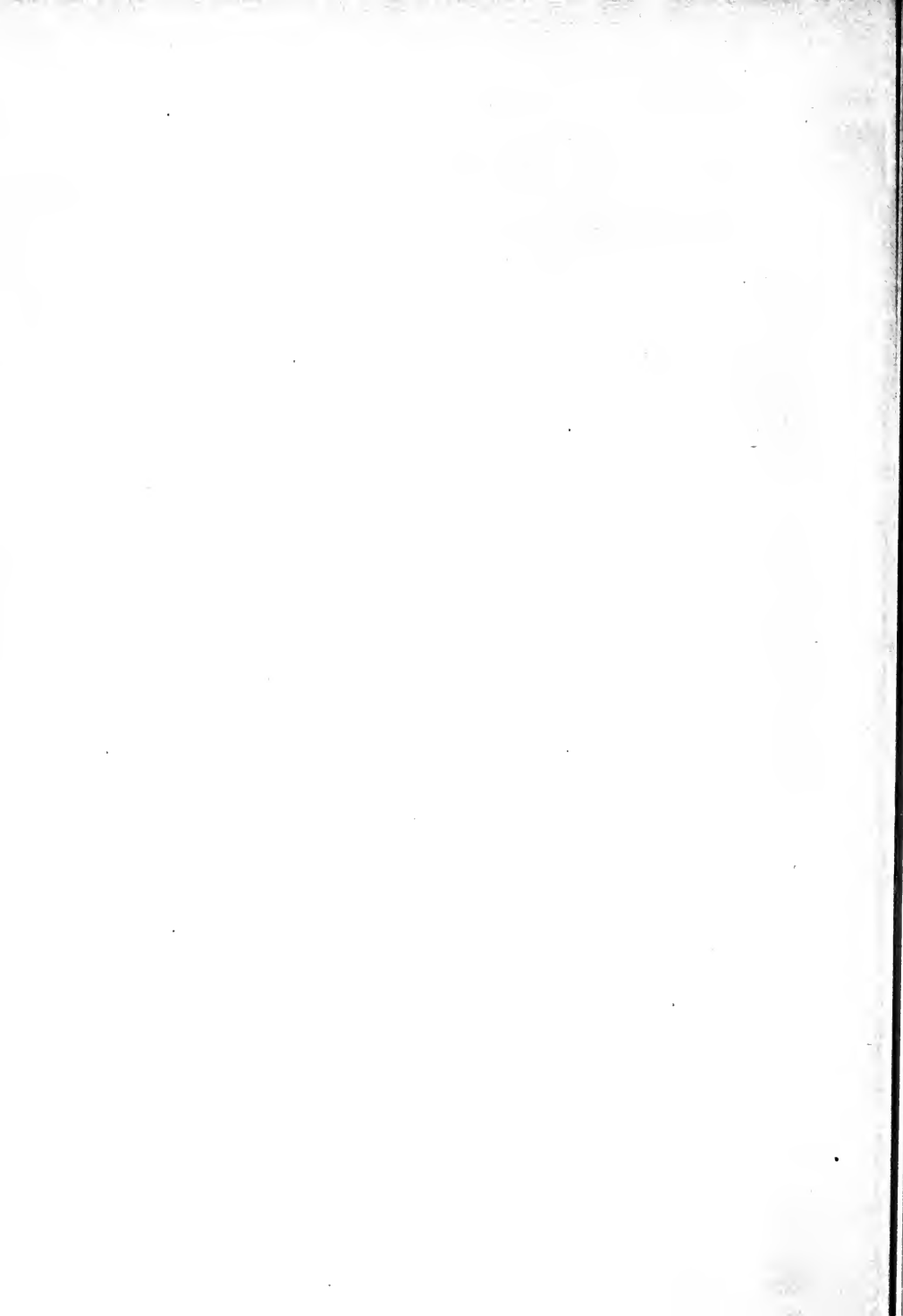
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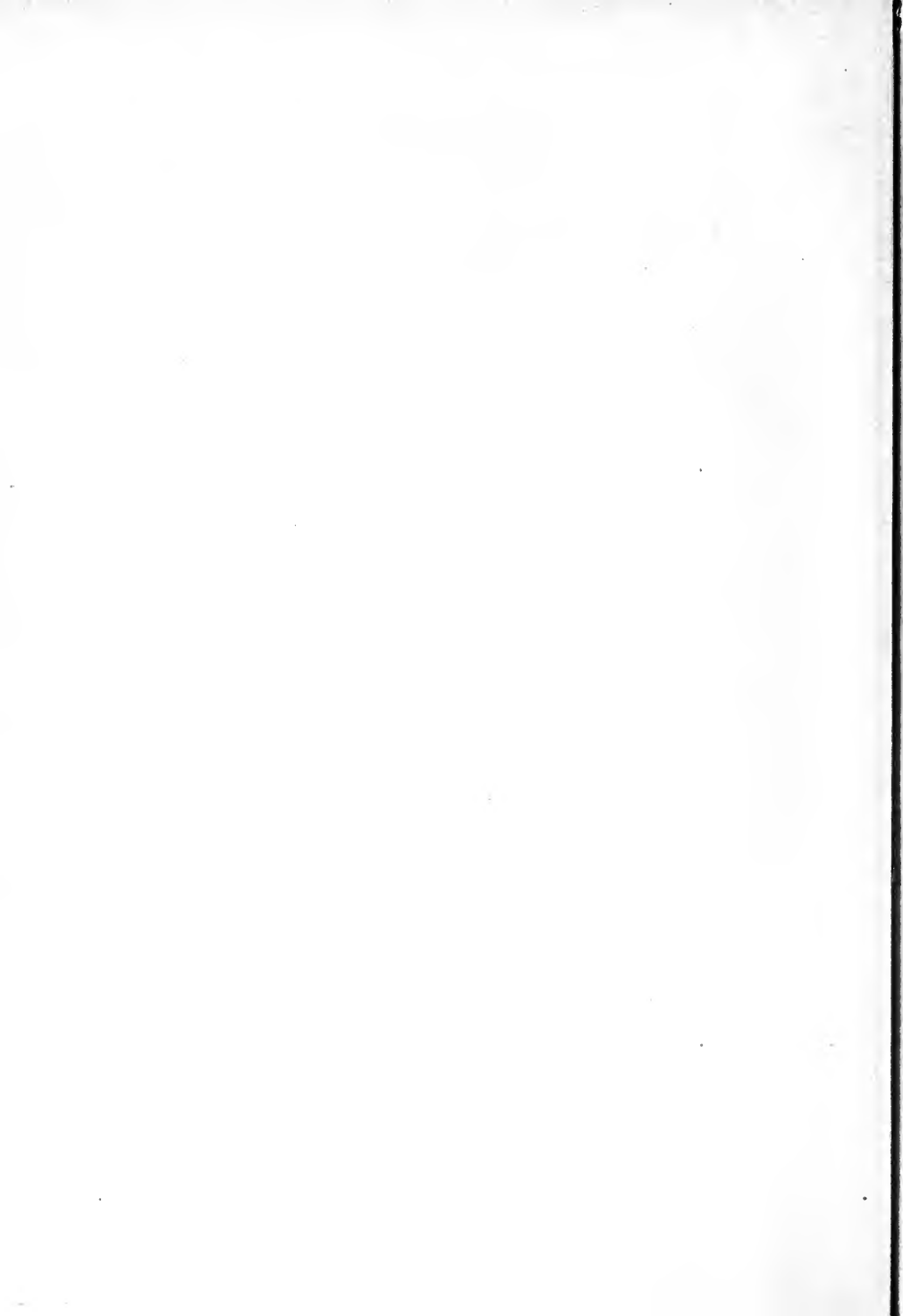
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**THE GREAT SMALL CAT
AND OTHERS**



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JIMINY CHRISTMAS: HIS FIRST
APPEARANCE

HE WAS PROBABLY A GRACELESS
VAGABOND, BORN IN THE GUTTER, WITH NO
PRETENSIONS TO BREEDING OR EVEN
GOOD LOOKS

THE GREAT SMALL CAT · AND OTHERS

Seven Tales



BY MAY E. SOUTHWORTH
ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND
DECORATED BY PEDRO J. LEMOS

PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS · SAN FRANCISCO

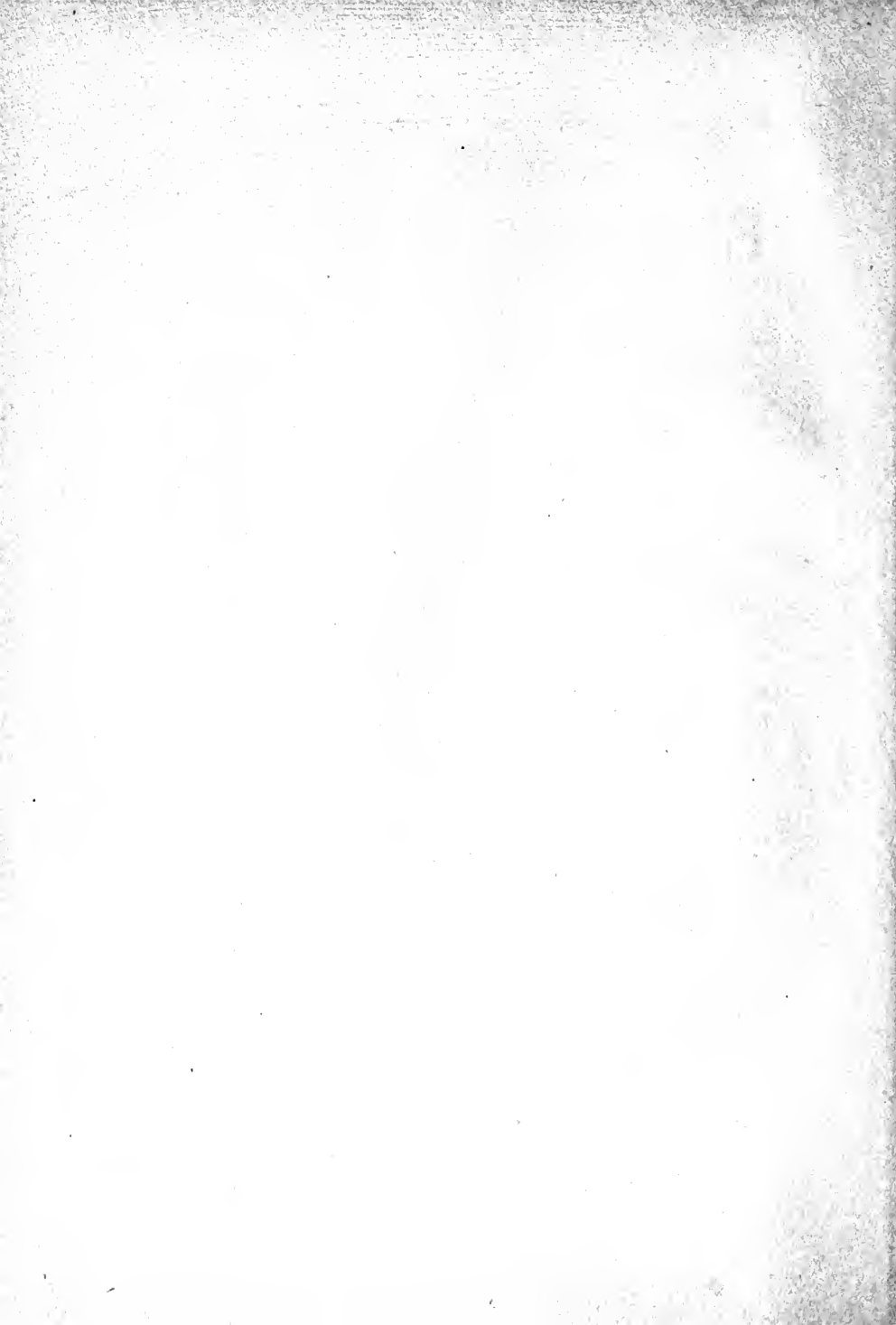
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Class of 1902

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE

IN LOVING
MEMORY OF THURSDAY
MY OWN

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INTRODUCTION

EVERYONE knows that there are all kinds of people; also there are all kinds of cats, worthy and unworthy. No two are exactly alike, and by those who do not class them in a bunch, but study them as individuals, they are found to have decided characteristics all their own, ever presenting strange surprises in a mixture of the unexpected higher qualities of civilization and the evils of lowest barbarism. The appeal of the kitten is almost universal, as there are few men, women or children, even those who "shudder" at a real cat, who can resist the subtle charm of these fuzzy lumps of playfulness. But cats, the alley cat, your cat, my cat, anybody's cat, all cats are in need of some brave champion, someone who will endeavor to portray their better side and be able to so increase for them the appreciation of mankind that they will come to what is only rightfully their own. Whatever your faith or practice may be touching cats, you are bound to admit that they must surely have some kind of mission here on earth. The trend of modern beneficence shows the day of even the cat is on the way, the day when they shall be better understood, making the world kinder to them in recognizing that these often sadly abused little creatures, have the feelings common to flesh and blood and are times without number, actuated by human thoughts and impulses. Recent years have done much in the way of atonement for persistent error in regard

INTRODUCTION

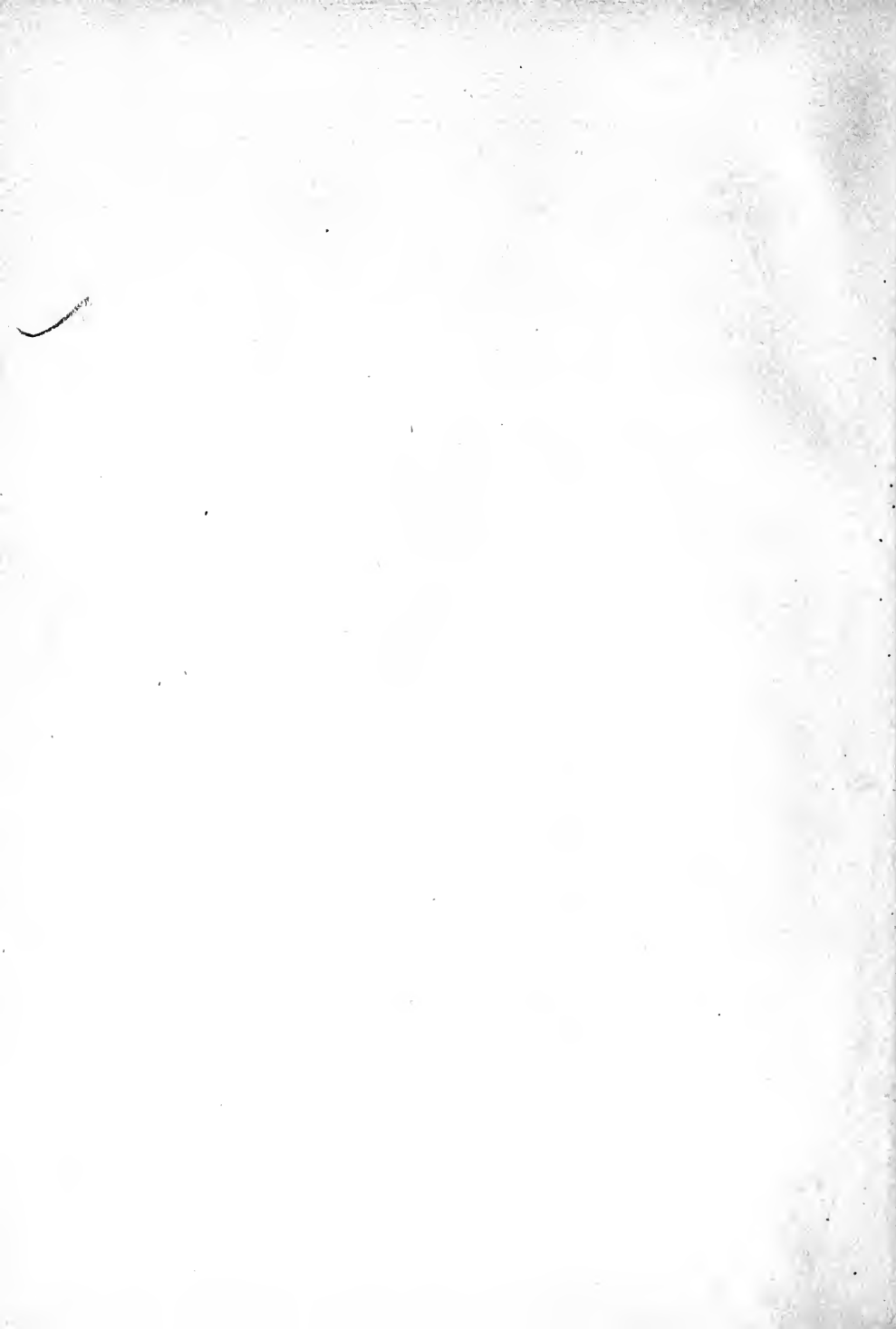
to their nature, by thrusting upon them a balance long their due in the form of many happy literary tributes, proving, in spite of much withering scorn, that environment has much more to do with their lack of worth than has original sin.

The lowly state of the average cat, just tolerated for its usefulness as a natural rat executioner, is unworthy of its better capabilities, and to the heart of a lover of the species, a cruelty. It is companionship which counts the most with cats, and when, instead of being a comfortable family institution as was intended, their nature being of the warmest and most sociable kind, they are mercilessly relegated to the cold cellar or outhouse to battle for life and sustenance, they are more miserable than anyone can imagine who does not know how a cat longs for home life and company. If left in this way to struggle for a meager existence, without a word of kindness, and chased for their very lives if they presume, in their lonely longing, to timidly enter the family refinement, is it a wonder that under these conditions, these dwellers in solitude develop only the worse and uglier traits in their disposition?

Although cats are brimful of human whims and moods and are also very human in their devotion to home, order and cleanliness, they are decidedly slow in attaching themselves to humans and not quick to give them their friendship. Unlike a dog, they maintain a rather haughty independence in the matter of reciprocity, and after they have decided that you are worthy of the honor of their confidence, and they have given it,

INTRODUCTION

it can only be retained by constant entreaty and on the strictest terms of obligation, never forced. To know something of the queer brain and really glowing heart beneath the mystery of their graceful furry coats, a heart which they guard almost fiercely against mere "curious" intimacy, it is necessary to make an effort; but as every cat lover knows, they will surely repay such effort in lavish response. And above all, in trying to get acquainted with cats, show them the compliment of companionship which they truly and cordially appreciate, for they, too, are in various ways "also human" and their readiness to respond to intimacy of this kind is a most gratifying surprise to the skeptical.

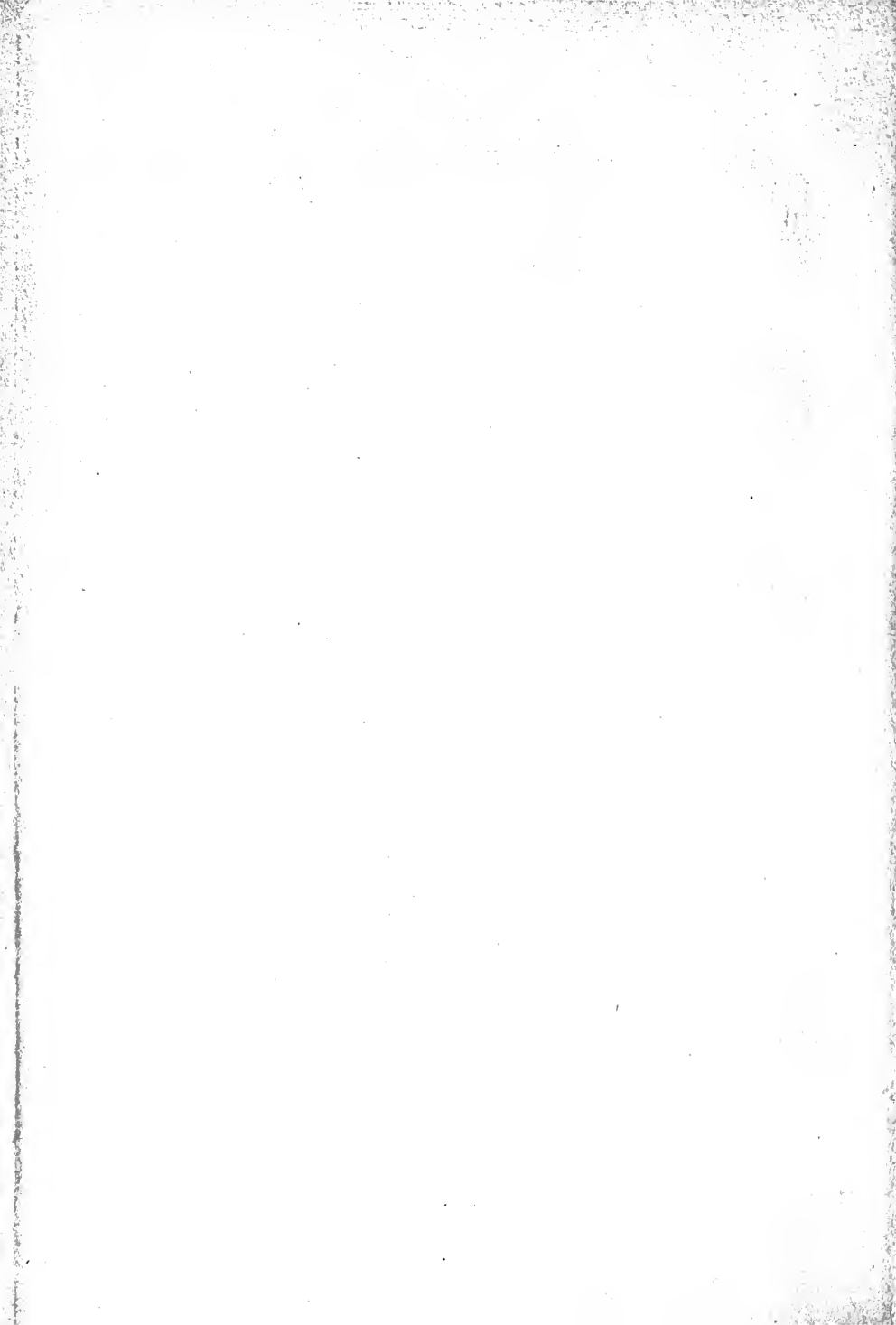




*The cat tails spring up in the hollow
But where can their late owners be?
The tale of their tails does not follow
When cat tails spring up in the hollow.
But the stream many secrets must swallow
So it may be their ghosts that we see.
So when cat tails spring up in the hollow
We surmise where their owners may be.*

Thomas Grant Springer





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THE PICTURES IN THIS BOOK

JIMINY CHRISTMAS:

HIS FIRST APPEARANCE Frontispiece

He was probably a graceless vagabond, born in the gutter, with no pretensions to breeding or even good looks.

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Although the small stray was minus all signs of pedigree, she held her head high and was accorded the respect and good treatment due a lady.

THURSDAY 34

As she never attained the full stature of an ordinary cat, she always looked but half-grown, but was the very perfection of dainty symmetry, her coat a solid black, almost blue in its depths.

THE CAT 52

Handsome, shining and saucy, the kitten had grown into the most splendid bigness of his race: all muscle and nerve, unusually broad of chest and looking as if bred to the mountain fastness and able to endure all sorts of pioneer hardships.

AÏDA AND SAADI 72

"Oh, lady! You do not suspect us of having seen any of your birds this morning?"

MAROONED 84

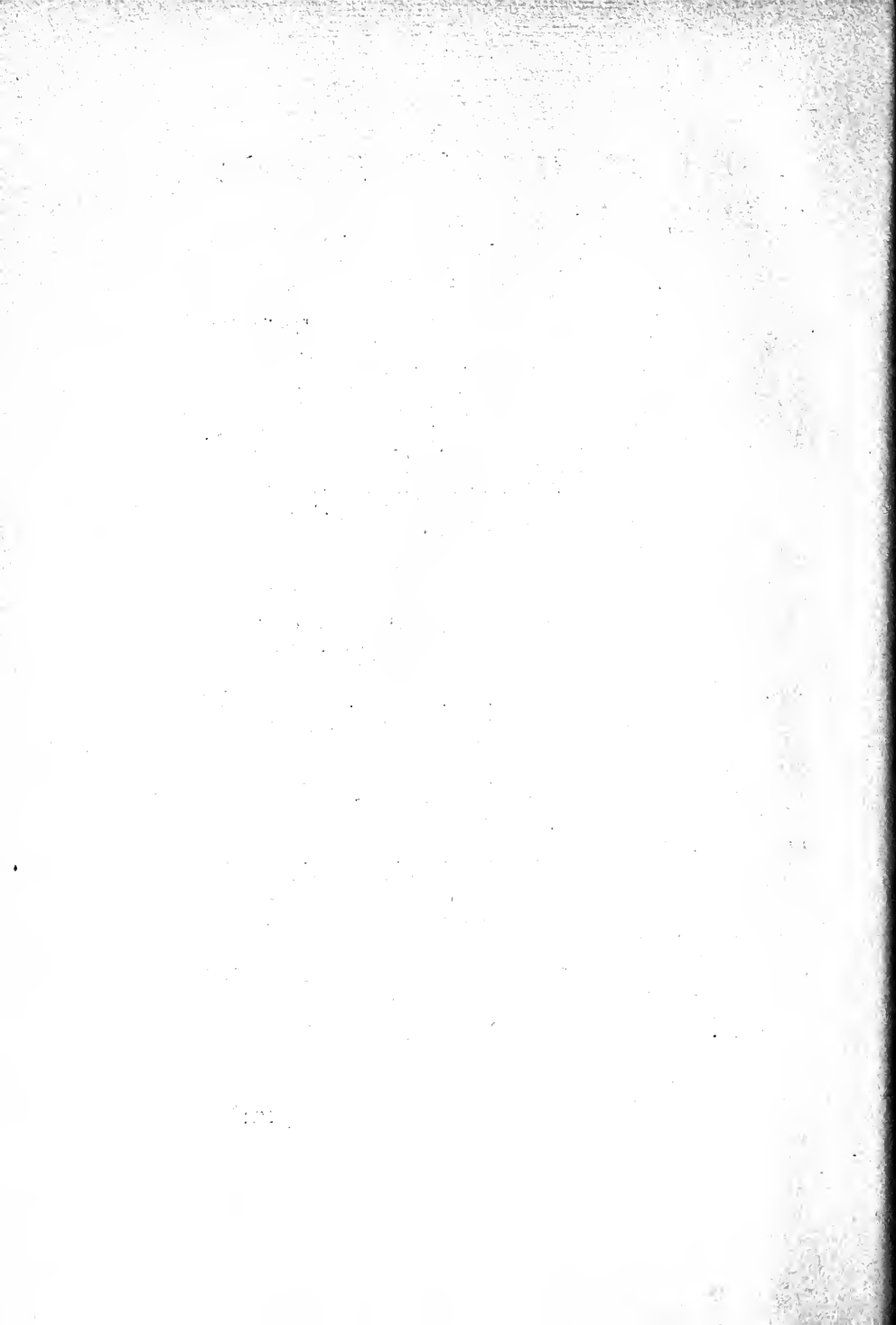
Neither disappointment nor ugly temper had broken his fierce sense of injury or his indomitable spirit.

MAIDA 102

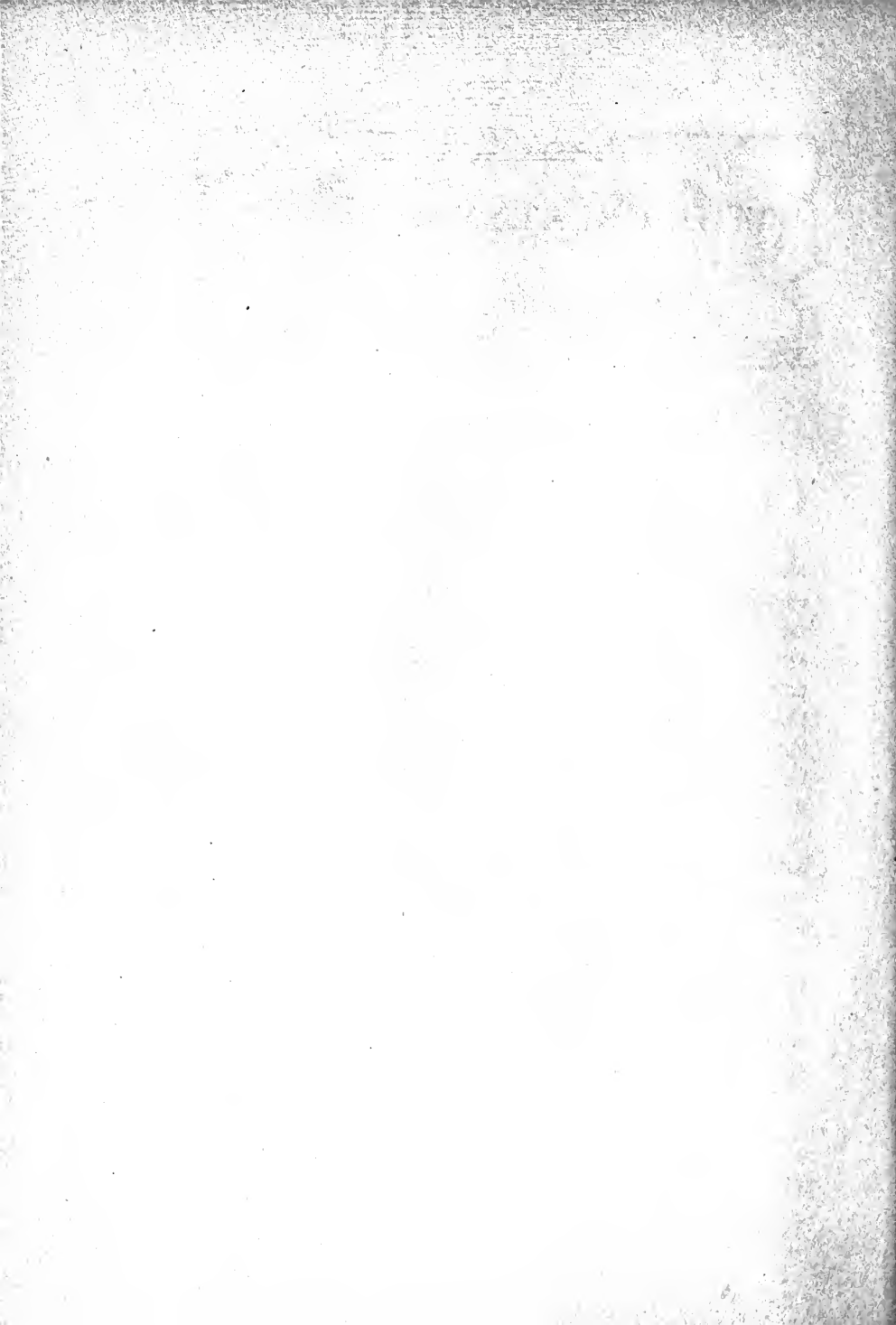
In long-suffering patience Maida would stretch herself in a streak of sunshine and survey the riotously incorrigible mites, indulging in their favorite pastime of playing tag all over her body.

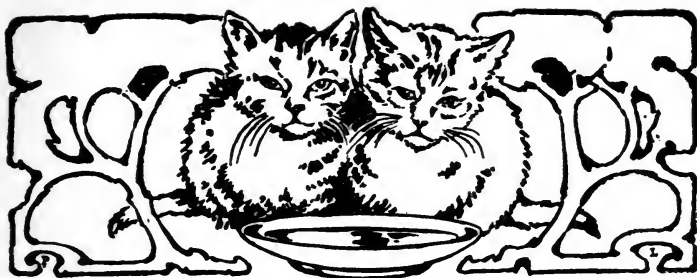
JIMINY CHRISTMAS, THE FREE SPIRIT 120

Born free, he kept his own wanton will free from enslavement to the end, living his own life in honor and honesty in an out-doors all his own.



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THE GREAT SMALL CAT

ONCE upon a time, a while ago, during pleasant hours spent in the "land of big cows and small horses," I met one of the most modest of black mother cats, but one with such a pathetic experience in her life as to make her stand alone, not as a cat, but as *the* cat. At any rate, the story as told by the young ranchman is absolutely true and surely worth the telling, if only to prove that cats are singularly human in their love for their offspring, and are all mother in sacrifice and thoughtful care, giving life itself if necessary in unselfish devotion.

The cat was small, bright-eyed and clean but apparently of the most commonplace and ordinary variety, and not distinguished by any special attractiveness as to species. Still, on hearing the "story of her life" as related by this man, one of her most faithful benefactors, of how she cheated fate and battled with fear and death, conquering every natural antipathy, it made one feel that it was an event to meet her. To en-

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counter such a plain unassuming little creature who had given positive proof of harboring in her small head the brain of a diplomat and of being so surprisingly shrewd, and so gloriously fearless, was an incident of such stirring revelation as to make it of marked consequence.

In telling the story, the cattleman said it was partly owing to the accident of the little mother-cat's being black in color that she was here on the ranch in a little corner that she felt was home and that meant happiness to her. There may be in some out-of-the-way corners of the world, people who still believe in magic and folk-lore and with them the fair fame of black cats ever suffers from that benighted superstition of ancient times, that they are creatures of witches and devils. But the more modern belief makes double reparation for this uncanny ignorance by giving them the reputation of not only always bringing good luck in their wake, but lovers as well.

Larry was squatting upon his heels, his broad back leaning carelessly against the "bunk house," while he gazed reminiscently down over his pipe at the modest bunch of black fur neatly snuggled in the dust at his side, all four paws tucked out of sight, when, in Western camaraderie, I coaxed from him the story I had wondered so much about and longed to hear in detail. As he began to tell me about it in the lazy, good-natured, provincial dialect of the plains, one hand strayed caressingly to the head of the "little pard" and lingered there lovingly while he talked and smoked.

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"Oh, she's just a small stray that loped in on our range, but y'u can bet ye'r life she's a winner all right and a bunch hard to beat. She's 'just cat,' but there ain't nothing nowhere purtier, and y'u couldn't go out in a whole round-up of felines and rope a gentler one, though she's grit clear through to the backbone."

The "bunch hard to beat" looked up into her friend's face with bright, inquiring eyes, understanding the love and approval in his glance if not the great distinction conferred upon her of being the bright, particular star in the story he was relating.

"Well, y'u see, it's this-a-way," explained Larry, in his pleasant drawl, removing his briar and stiffening his muscles: "Cats is mighty useful things. What would the blamed country be without them anyway?—an' it's no way reasonable that we could run *this* ranch without this little peacherino. She's just a soft pretty thing, but she's sure got spunk enough for a wild bull. Lordy me! we're just plumb foolish over her, and she don't step on nobody's bunions no more, y'u bet! She ain't that sort. She's so modest and quiet it beats all how good it makes y'u feel just to have her round; a sort of spiritual uplift and missionary 'home sweet home' broke gentle to the gang."

Evidently these men, really manly men, some of them as brown and wrinkled as an old leather shoe, were the little cat's sincere admirers. As I listened to the story, I stole her from the ranchman's hand and gathered her, almost reverently,

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in my lap, more then as a testimony to the big-heartedness and sterling human qualities of the Western cattlemen, than as the distinguished heroine of the narrative.

It seems that at the noon hour, about the middle of one April, while the men were idly loitering on the shady side of the adobe, waiting for the hour to strike which called them to work again, a dusty, fuzzy little black streak scooted in from the direction of the road and dropped all in a heap, breathless and exhausted, at their feet. The "déboo" of this miserable little stranger had been unannounced and the suddenness of this rather dramatic entrance upon the scene of the unexpected, though tiny débutante, caused quite a flutter among the men, and pipes and cigarettes were hastily laid aside in order that they might look over at close range this "feeble short horn." The bedraggled little "black streak" proved on examination to be the thinnest, most woebegone, footsore, starved and wholly exhausted black kitten ever seen, whose tired legs had been able to carry her just this far—not a step farther could she have gone. She was indeed a pitiful creature, half-dead with fear and fatigue, and in looks so painfully appealing that she waked compassion in even the stoniest heart. Evidently she had traveled far, without food or rest, as she was completely done for. Why she came, or from where, nobody could tell, but probably chased and hunted until absolutely worn out, she had in her extremity ventured into this refuge of humans, taking her chances. To the ever-

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lasting honor of these rough ranch hands, their tough bachelor hearts were touched by this helpless, sick-looking little mite of a kitten, and they decided that she was to stay and be made comfortable. Feeling half-ashamed of their compassionate impulse and in order to hide even from one another any unmanly sentiment in the matter, one said:

"H'its powerful good luck to have a black cat hit the camp! I like the color, boys, and have a hunch it'll bring us great; let's rope and brand her for our diggins."

So the "good luck" was not scatted off, but was introduced to the ranch and seemed very grateful for their soft-hearted hospitality. When she had lapped some good warm milk into her vacant stomach she gained sufficient strength to express her satisfaction with what had been "handed out to her," and showed a most beautiful willingness to stay by it.

The "hostess" of this ranch was a large, wide "widow woman," in eloquent vernacular "grass," one of those very capable, hard-working individuals whose precarious temper even when all went well with her, was never to be imposed upon. Her brisk, ponderous tread was a power, real and felt, and not to be trifled with for a moment in any mood. The boys realized that she would be "plumb discouraging" to any scheme for the adoption of this tiny waif, and knew the utter futility of trying to pull her heartstrings in any kind of sympathy for "only a cat." So they turned all their energies into the most guilty, barefaced

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personal coaxing and cajolery in order to get any kind of concession in her department for this additional feeder. As they expected, she was about as responsive as a Chinese Joss and as hard as a stone to any possible allurements the kitten might develop as a home-maker, and the very most they could gain from the "old grouch" was a grudging consent to just "let her stay round till some other place can be found for her."

"And her face wasn't a mite smiling or even friendly as she said it." So the poor little kitten, being only on sufferance, accepted such crusts of charity as came her way, and was mighty grateful; for she was very hungry, very weary, and good food had long been a strange thing in her small stomach. It was plain the kitten had never known anything of home or a fireside and was simply of the humble garden variety of cat. Yet she was not an outcast or a tramp by nature, for she proved very quick to fall into ways which contributed to the cosiness of the cabin kitchen, even with the scant encouragement she received. The feminine eternal heart-throb of home-making was certainly there in her breast, for just like "other folks" she took her allotted place in the corner back of the big stove and was singularly human in the snug enjoyment of the comfort of it.

In the cattle country the one momentary lull in affairs is when the day's work is over and night has settled down over the lonesome miles of ranch and the men are all gathered in a circle round the open fire. In this good-fellowship under the big stars one night, they fell to discussing their little



THE GREAT SMALL CAT
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THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE
OF GREAT
BRITAIN
AND IRELAND
VOLUME
LXXV
PART I
1905

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black protégée, and the permission they had to only "let her stay round." As they were almost maternally solicitous that she should have a permanent home with them, they decided that as her sponsors they were in a way responsible and had better get busy at once and attend to her serious education, laying out the details of her conduct on a straight and narrow path of duty.

Larry was the one selected to "break her gentle," and at his very first opportunity was requested to "do the decent" and to start her off with a strictly private and business tip, speaking for the whole outfit. In recalling this incident in the game, Larry's big laugh rang out until he wiped the tears away with a corner of the gay bandanna knotted about his neck.

"I took this tenderfoot aside," he said, "and gave it to her personally and straight, y'u bet. Come here, pard, says I, I've got to give it to y'u private and special. We want y'u to camp in this yere diggins for always, but, if y'u get a chance to stay, y'u've got to conduct yereself decorous. This yere is a bachelor round-up with one skirt that's the big boss of the whole outfit. What she says goes and y'u want to get that into yere system from the start-off. We want to give y'u a square deal with no superfluous language, but She's the cinch and y'll get what's coming to y'u, all right, if y'u don't go cautious."

The recounter said that the very grave and polite way the kitten took this "rounding-up spiritually" was killing, solemnly looking him straight in the eye with painful concentration,

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her little nose in nervous crinkles. Larry confessed that the big effort this small vagrant made "to get the drift" of what he was trying to impress on her mind, made him feel like a huge brute. Anyway, by some trick of his slow, delicious drawl, the timely warning "sunk in" and found a responsive chord in her consciousness. In some way she fathomed his friendly intention and understood, at least, the magic timbre of his soothing voice which flashed back entire confidence and drew to him a friend, one who was infinitely shy, but one who would trust him absolutely while life lasted.

These paternal young cowmen, having delivered their souls of this religious act of discipline, "pulled the stake" and let her go free. By the time the days of kittenhood had passed the "stray" had grown plump and her coat glossy, and although minus all signs of pedigree, she held her head high and had acquired a certain modest dignity, sufficient to deceive a layman and to insure the respect and good treatment due a lady. Evidently she had been careful to mind the warning and was conducting herself "decorus." In return for their hospitality she attended to her part of the ranch business by keeping the cabin and pantry strictly clear of all rats and mice. Occasionally she gave chase to the wild things good for cats, and at milking time, if she happened to "hang round," the men were sure to give her a fine dessert of warm milk. As the days and weeks went happily by for her, she unobtrusively arranged her life to suit the pleas-

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ant place she had fallen into, gaining an honest living by her skill, with a few luxuries thrown in at unexpected intervals by the men, who would forget her for days at a time, owing to her modest way of keeping in the background. If on some lean and hungry days, when hunting had not been so successful, she would sometimes wistfully sniff, with eager, yearning stomach and longing, though decently distant eyes, the bountiful, savory mess of the kitchen, or venture to rub too coaxingly near the bustling form juggling the pots and pans with energetic vehemence, she was soon made to understand that she had overstepped the bounds of her tolerance, in trespassing on the particular domain of one who just endured her unwelcome presence. Being feminine and an unusually sensible and peaceable cat, she soon developed a surprising acuteness in diplomacy and in warding off unnecessary trouble. After various mortifying experiences she found it best to be "only handy" at such times as the feasts were in progress, creeping most cautiously in, a-tiptoe on her soft noiseless pads, just to be there in case any tidbits *should* come her way.

All might have been well, and life a long holiday, leading her in pleasant ways to the end, had she not erred, and so innocently and blindly erred. Of course it was scandalous, if natural, and not to be tolerated for one moment by the already much overburdened landlady. The downfall came as a terribly stiff jolt to poor kitty, for her heart had swelled with guiltless pride over her sin and its achievement.

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One sad Sunday morning she was discovered in her cosy corner, a very picture of innocent content over the beautiful surprise she had created for the family. There she lay with her eyes half-closed, softly beaming in rapture on six very small, newly born infants at her breasts. As she was "discovered" she looked up in her delirium of happiness with a hesitating, half-apologetic sort of smile, as one longing for, yet meeting, no response. Her anxiety was so exactly human that no one could mistake her meaning or her little weak smile of hesitating conciliation. But it froze in a flash when with frightened dismay she heard the hustling housewife's loud and angry denunciation of "the march that hussy had stolen on us," and the sentence of "immediate death" or "transportation" pronounced on "her and her brood," in stentorian and not-to-be-trifled-with tones.

These square men with square jaws were "all in a heap" over the size and caliber of the shock their pet had handed out to them. The smoldering spark of guardianship that had been fanned to a warm, comfortable flame in their breasts was not so easily extinguished, but they realized that all pleading and diplomacy with the outraged Authority would be in vain this time. No pet on the ranch had ever, in an unobtrusive way, gained so firm a hold on their stout hearts and "their pile of hope was busted well" by this rude interruption to the tremendous bid they had made on the bad-tempered woman's favor. Not only did they hate to part with this shy, little, inoffensive protégée, but that she had failed to "make good" in the

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eyes of the one whom, in their fiercest rage they dared not oppose, and so had lost her home, was a sickening disappointment. As they braced themselves for the worst and stood there smiling indulgently down on the cat so snug in her bed, there was a long and rather anxious pause during which they all seemed tongue-tied, until at last one said in playful disgust:

"Humph! y'u've been plumb busy to-day, hav'n't y'u, old girl, and this time, like all females, handing out trouble for yereself with both hands."

They were both disgusted and "plenty sorrowful" over the terrible fiat, but it was a case, on their part, of "have to," and a bad case, too. Not that they were afraid, but they were "hobbled," all right, as well as "bridle wise," and frankly confessed that when it came to women, they *were* "a mite timid." But since there was a choice of evils, in sorrowfully bending to the inevitable they, of course, decided on "transportation." In indignation they considered places, finally determining to take the offending family across the river, far, far, away where they would never more be able to trespass on so reluctant a hospitality as the ranch cabin afforded. In wide-eyed wonderment and feverish anxiety, the crest-fallen young mother followed every movement in the preparations that were being made for her journey. She, of course, could not understand, but watched with vastly puzzled eyes all this strange confusion about her bed, feeling that she was surely in some way responsible for this unusual excitement. In nervous haste she passion-

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ately licked the wee babies with tender, mothering tongue, and with soft caressing murmurs as if assuring *them* of safety and was about to do it all over again with utmost care in hopes of being able to disperse the gloom they had evidently created when she and the kits were lifted gently into a covered basket which the men had been carefully preparing for the conveyance. They knew of a place, "the furtherest ever," a real home ranch where the house-mother would be really glad of this family. It was far enough away so that the exile could never return, and besides, what made it an absolutely safe asylum in the judgment of these men was that it was across a deep flowing river, which meant that there could be no "stampede" back. Even for the most homesick of kitties and one who "sure had spunk," it would be madness to attempt to return across *that*.

These big men, big physically and big in tenderness and sympathy, usually "took the bit in their mouths and got whatever they went for," and with pretty smart directness, too. But they were shy, their nerve forsaking them entirely, when it came to tackling a woman on her own stamping ground, and that woman the very capable provider of their "three square per." Why she had taken this obstinate caprice and unreasonable dislike they did not try to conjecture. It was beyond male understanding and they lovingly alluded to her as the "one and original Chinese puzzle." They said "women is queer" with that long-suffering tolerance which the male human accords the vagaries of the female.

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The rangeman is nothing if he lacks that one remarkably comfortable trait of adaptability, and so, although they were not "stuck on the job" of removing the cat, they were forced by virtue of their very large necessity not to get into a "mix-up," by reason of the woman's crabbed temper and strange antagonism.

So two volunteer martyrs, boiling, seething volcanoes inside, shamedly and reluctantly took up the basket, holding it as gingerly as if it were a case of eggs instead of a case of a mother and her harvest of shame, and dismally started for the ferry. After crossing the river they "pulled their freight" on the trail a mile farther back inland, which led upwards into a wide broad meadow and to the home of a friendly ranch-boss. The buxom wife welcomed their unexpected arrival and the "family" with open arms, telling them that she had long been wanting a younger breed of cats to take the place of "old Tom," now getting lazy and "no 'count," and that she felt flattered that these faithful friends had selected this ranch as the home for their pet. The men fixed a nice warm bed in the sanctuary of a vacant manger in one of the corrals, counted out the infants and found them all O. K., and then tried to coax the cat to nestle down and mother them. But she would not, merely crouching over them instead, in an anxious sort of way with her ears perked inquiringly forward, in an attitude of miserable bewilderment.

The outcome of her "happy surprise" had been a crushing blow, but one which would wake

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within her such a marvelous spirit of determination and endurance as to render her distinguished among cats. The second "happy surprise" she was to unfold for their entertainment was one little anticipated and one that would take the breath from even these hardened men.

As they turned finally to leave her she gave a long agonized mew that was so like a human call of utter desolation, and which caused such queer fluttering thumps in the men's hearts, that they went back to console her, if possible, and to tuck the babies all in again, with the caution to lie still and be good.

"Now look here, Cat, y'u don't want to take it to heart like this! Y'u've been treated low down and it's a darned shame, but there's no use getting all fussed up over it. Y'u can bank on yere pards making things pretty mean and sassy for that 'old porkypine.' She's sure in fer sorrow! The rats and mice will do things, something scandalous, in that old pantry of hern. Now, go by-low, and take good care of the babies till we come again."

Waving her a sorrowful "ta-ta" with their hands, they at last left her, to return by way of the ferry, singing as they went, in their mellow cowboy cadence, an old Scotch folk-lore song which they thought quite appropriate to the occasion and soothing to the mother:

There was an old cat, and a black cat, too,
That had so many children, she didn't know what to do.
To save them from fighting and scratching and bawling,
She pinned them all up by the ears when out calling.

THE GREAT SMALL CAT

Little they suspected that the echo of the thrilling tenderness in their voices as they chanted this low refrain, growing fainter and fainter as they disappeared down the hill, was stirring an impulse in her thumping heart, which when mature, would work out into so wise and cunning a scheme as to render their deliberate, well-planned human precautions as naught.

Down deep beneath the apparently indifferent nature of every animal quivers an intense human love of home that glows with a steady flame as long as life lasts. It is God's own gift to the animals and in the heart of this little exile it was a passion that had grown into an intense determination for that one bit of earth from which she had been torn, and the only place in all the world that seemed good to her. This divine longing for her old quarters was a vibrant thrill, thumping, thumping continually, like a trip-hammer in her homesick breast, and already daring the best and bravest in her nature to dangers appalling to a much bigger and bolder beastie. There was no outcry and no appeal for help in the desolate hours she must have spent in meditating on the venturesome risk of this dumb challenge, but deep down in that undiscovered country of the cat's outraged loyalty, there must have been something powerfully impelling to have given her the daring to undertake so desperate and venturesome a deed.

In the velvet dusk of a night, not long afterward, a solitary figure, lean, black, and small, might have been seen, trotting at a steady

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pace with a purposeful air that surely meant business, carefully picking her way among the weeds and undergrowth and making straight for the cottonwoods and willows that grew along the bank of the river. The determined form was steady of nerve, carrying her head high, and in her mouth a limp, nerveless black bundle of fur. When she reached the brink of the swift-flowing, trackless water, there was a quivering pause, as if she were perhaps weighing the chances of life and death; but only for an instant, for immediately there was a *plunk* and she sank right down into the whirl of the dreadful blackness and then—silence.

Holding her burden high in her mouth, safe and dry, she soon dragged her wet and heavy body up the bank on the opposite shore, and obeying the sure instinct of her useful little nose set her face right for the old place in the kitchen cabin which was the cherished spot of her determined desire. She placed this smallest and least pretty of her brood in the old nest that had been so rudely despoiled, but without waiting to comfort or even to warm the wee mite, turned her face resolutely toward the return journey. There was no time to stop, as ten times more she must fight the good fight and battle with the cold and danger of the awful and tedious transit.

The gray dawn was just breaking by the time the intrepid little mother, utterly exhausted, lay beside her six babies in her old homey bed, a mute reproach to the caprice or hasty anger that had made this cruel test necessary. The six sources

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of all her trouble were tugging hungrily at her breasts, looking as innocent and harmless as downy puffs, having already been licked and groomed into tidiness by their forgiving mother.

The housekeeper's gasp of astonishment changed into a cry of disbelief when she came into the cabin and found the family so snugly settled in their old quarters. Surely "the boys" had deceived her in regard to having taken the cat across the river, or how could this marvel be? The round, fixed and troubled eyes of the cat looked questioningly and bravely up into her enemy's startled face while her fate hung in the balance, with a courage that feared but did not flinch, and there could be no mistaking their half-defiant plea this time. It would, indeed, have been a heart of steel not to have been moved by the pity of it, as the frail bit of motherhood looked from the coldly inquiring eyes bending above her, to the collection at her breasts, with a tenderness and pride that would have shamed a human mother. Evidently the milk of human kindness had not all dried up in the rough woman's motherly breast in rubbing all these years against the sharp edges of Western ranch life and she was at last touched in a vulnerable spot, for the flush of anger faded from her irate face, and the hand so threateningly raised fell in a half-gentle pat on the small mother so bravely awaiting her decision.

Afterward when the full significance of what she had seen there had filtered to her understanding and she knew the story of the cat's valiant

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struggle with death and the marvelous feat of her perilous journey just to "be home" and with those she had "loved and lost a while," herself among the rest, her face softened and the first real smile she had shown for years beamed on her face, chasing the old hardened lines to the jumping-off point. Even the hearts of these big bluff cowmen quailed in contemplating the Spartan nerve this helpless young mother had shown in making that piteous journey, back and forth in the lonely silence of the black night, mindful of each and every one of those precious babies. This was just a plain, common everyday cat, but one with an extraordinary calm determination and a stout heart overflowing with two sacred and human attributes, mother-love and home-love. She had paid the price, fearlessly and pluckily, to ease these human aches in her breast, a price the agony of which perhaps we have no way of measuring, but one from which we know she would have shrunk in horror under ordinary circumstances.

This small animal of no pretensions whatever, manœuvered and fought her successful battle alone, daring even to challenge a bitter enemy, and gained not only the home that she had insisted upon keeping, but in the end, by a strange caprice of fortune, the far greater and unexpected compensation of finding a warm soft spot in a heart supposed to be invulnerable.

It was not necessary, when the men came in to breakfast, for each to deny any conspiracy in the cat's home-coming. Wet, weary and cold,

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the cat told her own story. That their astonishment was genuine, no one could doubt, for they were struck dumb as they stared blankly at the "monster," though their beaming faces could not hide the cheery welcome they gave her in spite of being unable to utter it. They were evidently "plumb locoed" for even the boldest and most reckless of them, knowing what the mother must have been through, could not look unmoved on this miracle of miracles—not one kitling missing of the many, and each one meaning a trip across the dark, swirling current. Emitting sonorous and somewhat profane ejaculations, but decidedly to the point, they "sort'a" laughed and shrugged their shoulders, evidently unable to find any language polite enough to express their sentiments on the subject and perhaps it dimly occurred to them that it might be better not to express them anyway. But these rough diamonds were always sure to come out strongest under hardest conditions, so one of them, in quick kindness, to relieve the rather awkward strain of the situation, "made good" by exclaiming with shame-faced tenderness: "The trouble with cats is, y'u can't never tell what they know and what they don't, nor what darned foolish audasus ideas they got tucked away in their measly carcasses."

There was no use arguing with the warlike "missus," although they surely felt there was argument "a plenty" on their side and chafed at the mandates of their more polite diplomacy, but swallowed their wrath in silent indignation, as being the better part of valor, too happy in

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the strange turn of affairs to parley over it. As Larry said, "There ain't no depending on females," and surprises await you at every turn. However, a woman is never so humble as when proven biased in judgment or instinct, and whatever their former differences may have been, the hour of surrender on this woman's part showed that deep down inside she was made of the proper stuff, and that it was not hardness of heart but the hardness of her life that had given her this rough exterior. This strange tenderness that pity had been able to awaken in the woman's heart had been dormant all these lonely years and was probably not intended for a cat at all, but for something dearer and sweeter; still, in lieu of its natural vent, it was decreed it should be lavished on this nice little comfortable substitute. Thus one tiny flash of love-light transformed completely her disagreeable bearing and declared for an everlasting friendship between the large woman of the large ranch and the small cat. Apparently there was some secret understanding between them, for it was a turning point and the beginning of a new era in the life of each. Hereafter the earth and the fulness thereof seemed to be the cat's. However the victory she had won sat very modestly on the unassuming diplomat who humbly took up her duties just where she had left them off, and in spare moments tried to show her gladness in being safe at home and in good fellowship, by opening and shutting her small claws ecstatically and purring like a small drum.

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There was no public display on the woman's part of this wonderful burst of tenderness in her heart, for she would have been ashamed to show how good it felt to be human, but the lesson had "took" and evidently "took hard," for it bore fruit in a wonderful moderation in her tyrannous rule and even a redemption of her looks. The old woebegone lines in her face, which her own hardness had traced there, fast disappeared, and she was transformed into a living woman, one who felt good and warm inside and showed it in her attitude toward all. After all, love is the only miracle, and hearts are the same the world over, and perhaps it was God's timely economy that only a poor little waif of a homesick cat should have lived and suffered just to be the angel to make the whole world new for this bitter woman-heart. In graciously showing this entirely unexpected softness, and a new-born protecting interest in the cat, the woman brought to herself the love of many, and basking in its radiance was like being raised from the dead, opening up as it did a better understanding with all in a sort of friendly comradeship. Her manner toward the "little black mascot," as the cat was now called, was at all times sociable and intimate, although to have let her or the family forget for one moment that discipline was her prerogative, would have been to betray the pose of her service of years among them.

On the morning of the cat's return she merely squared matters with her own conscience by taking her medicine in so far as to confess her miser-

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able blunder by throwing out her hands in a sort of helpless gesture and bravely assuming the role of Destiny by issuing a final mandate: "She's had enough, and she's going to stay right here." Then she shut her lips ominously tight together as if ignoring the possibility of any further discussion on the subject, which hint was gladly heeded by these alert young men who were surely "onto their job." Larry said, there was even no "back talk" and no "crowing, merely a little snicker," but even that not too noticeable, as they gazed at each other in helpless, bashful awkwardness, waiting for someone to be bold and brave enough to "get busy" so that they could all "get out o' sight." At last, one care-free, happy young lad, with a little meaning twinkle in his blue eyes, absolutely unable to restrain his hilarious approval any longer, impulsively laid his hand on the widow's very generously upholstered shoulder in passing, and said confidentially in a hoarse whisper:

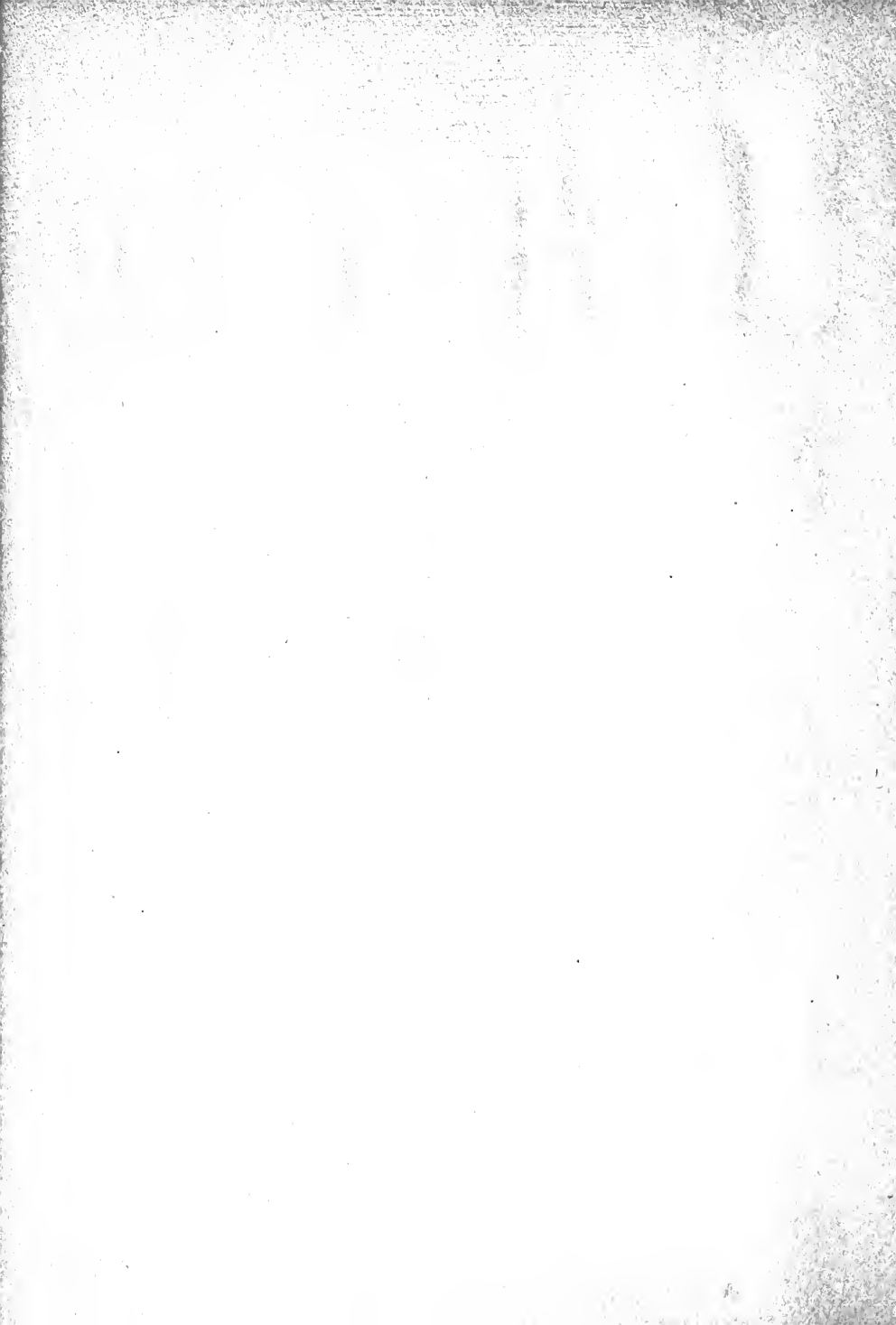
"Them's the kind of sentiments, and y'u're sure some lady! And she's a great small cat and will sing y'u to sleep o' nights."

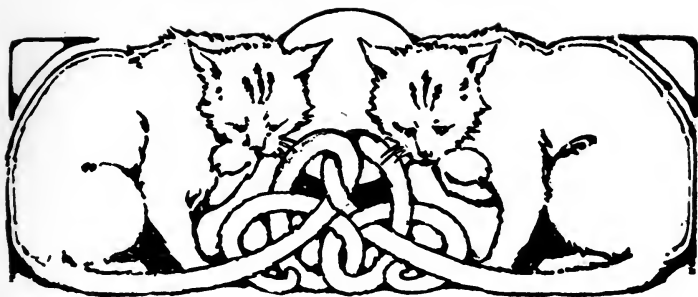
A joyful grin spread over the whole bunch as they rather sheepishly made their way to the door and bolted outside, heaving great sighs of relief as they struck the freedom of the outer air.

"And the best of it all," explained Larry, smiling broadly; "h'it's all true, cross my heart if it tain't, and the lady took her medicine good and proper and landed kerchunk on her feet all right."

And throwing me a brief half-nod of youthful friendliness he was off.

THURSDAY





THURSDAY

A GIRL, a hammock, a book and a day in June: a happy combination for memories, idleness and half-sadness, with no end of interesting possibilities that might come to one who loves and responds to the allurements.

It was one of those hot early June days in a California valley when all nature seems held in quiet suspense. The wonderful and unusual stillness brooding over this little sunny spot in the world, at last arrested the girl's attention as she lazily swung in the hammock under a group of giant oaks, and she let her book fall to the ground in unconscious neglect. Suddenly her ear caught a feeble wail borne on the quiet air, a sound that held her breathless, with a little sobbing catch in her throat. It was too indistinct to have attracted attention save for nature's sympathetic hush, and scarcely seemed separated from the throbbing silence all about her; yet, responsive and expectant she held her breath to listen to the secret it might unfold. The faint cry was insistent and at last revealed itself to her unmistakably as the

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tiny mew of a tiny kitten. When convinced of this she was roused to alertness in an instant for she had a special predilection for baby cats, the smaller the better. The pathetic little cry for help seemed to grow weaker and fainter as she blindly followed the sound, which finally led her to the loft of the stable. Even then, although she realized that she was "warm on the scent," she could not locate the exact spot this weak little mew came from. But presently she felt sure that it must come from the depths of a huge packing case, half-filled with books, which was stored in a far corner. The box being almost her own height, she could by no possibility lean over sufficiently for her eyes to pierce its dusky depths. Hastily getting a bench for a perch and a lighted candle to set at a knot hole half-way down the side of the box, she discovered its dark secret to be a small bit of coal black glossy fur, without much form or shape, lying flat as a pancake on one of the cold hard books; the tiniest mite of a live cat she had ever seen.

As she lifted the little limp, cold bunch to her warm hand, it ceased to mew and, she thought, to breathe, but she carried it to the house and found it alive and able to take a little warm milk from a spoon. With repeated doses of this nourishment at regular intervals the baby began to revive and at bedtime was quite a normal kitten, except that its frame was so unusually small and meager.

Thinking that the mother-cat would surely return at night to the place where she had left her

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one wee infant, the girl returned this "special edition" to the books in the packing case, making it as warm and comfy as possible. In the morning her first waking thoughts flew to her tiny protégée and on going to the box she found the poor little thing just as she had left it the night before—no mother, and evidently abandoned. This time, on carrying it to the house she made it a permanent abiding place and continued to feed it with a spoon, as it seemed to grasp with readiness the idea of getting its food in this fashion and after a few lessons, took very kindly to it.

The mystery of how this little orphan came to be in the case of books, alone and deserted, was never satisfactorily solved, although on inquiry the girl was told that a neighbor had found a black mother-cat dead in her laundry about the time of the discovery of the little kitten. It was thought that this must have been the mother of the little waif and that she had doubtless met with an untimely death.

At any rate, no mother ever appeared to claim the baby, so she was adopted and given the name of Thursday, that being the day of her advent. She was so wee that until she was able to help herself to a grown-up cat's food, she was always fed from a spoon, and soon grew to look upon this useful article as the source of all motherly comfort, and to take milk from it as the chief object in living. In all her after life, the sight of a spoon seemed to give her a thrill and it was always very funny to watch her keenness in dis-

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covering anyone at the table using this, her foster-mother, which she, very naturally, regarded as her own special property. This ridiculously small defender of her propriety rights would make her resentment of this trespass on her claim manifest in various cunning ways. Often she would watch with impatient, glaring eyes, from her vantage ground, the floor, each and every spoonful, as it passed from plate to mouth, hoping in time to stare this particular offender out of countenance. But if her jealous, concentrated round eyes failed to attract the desired attention, when longer forbearance became impossible, she would jump to the lap of the transgressor, thrusting her little pink nose into the hand that had so basely ignored her indignation, and intercept the spoon with a dainty paw and a comical air of haughty rebuke, as if saying: "Little Thursday's! Have you forgotten?"

This impertinence, which the affront had been designedly coaxing forth, never failed to bring her a very substantial reward, and certainly no reproof. And so the baby was spoiled and encouraged in her wilful little ways which were considered the "cutest ever." There was never a time in all her life when she would not willingly leave affairs ordinarily attractive to cats, to come and sit serenely on some lap, with a bib about her neck, a sweet smile of peace on her face, to be fed with a spoon. She never reached the full stature of an ordinary cat, but grew into a wondrously beautiful little beastie and developed the most independent, self-contained, evasive personality

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imaginable, for a cat. Looking no more than half-grown she was the very perfection of dainty symmetry, her coat a solid glossy black, almost blue in its depths. She was remarkably quick in her graceful motions, even for a cat, and had the dearest little round blue eyes, just scintillating with mischief and flaming with an inordinate love of fun which radiated to the tip of her inquisitive little nose and from there to the quivering end of her wicked, ecstatic tail. She also possessed such queer twists in a highly strung and very nervous temperament, that her erratic moods were variable and often startling surprises. But she was always singularly human and steadfast in one feminine quality and that was in liking to do just as she pleased. One of her "queer twists" was, at various intervals, to have sudden spasms of hilarious gaiety and to give vent to these frantic spells in play that were the times of her life. She never had any company in these grand romps, but was strangely independent and wildly happy, the imp of play which had possession, seeming to have endless sources of its own in the way of society and amusement. She would race "sideways" through the house, her "baby blue eyes" black as coal, turn double "upside downs," and play a kind of hide-and-seek all by herself, plainly just play for play's sake until her frolic, which sometimes rose to a frenzy, had exhausted her crazy mood.

Among our precious lares and penates, was a magnificent Irish setter, a handsome fellow with a coat of wavy golden red hair and eyes of such

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beseeking softness that he won all mankind. Until the advent of Thursday he had been sole proprietor and sovereign owner of the sunny back porch and playground, not to mention the hearts he ruled. But with the coming of the little black lady all his previous rights were changed, she, with nonchalant impudence, taking cool and unchallenged possession of all, including the king himself, who seemed one of her most willing subjects. She quickly learned and presumed on her power over him but with heroic patience this handsome fellow yielded glad obedience and was ever ready to bend before her small feminine coquetry, his gallantry seeming boundless. Like a knight of old, he was always rushing to her rescue and ever espousing her cause, using his strength generously at all times in her behalf. If she happened to cry within her privileged precincts of the house, screened from his entrance, if he was anywhere on the grounds within sound of her call, he would instantly come to her succor, peering through the screen with such an anxious, troubled expression in his dear goldy-brown eyes, his head turned first on one side and then on the other, a way setters have when trying to fathom mysteries. Having satisfied himself that she was in no serious trouble or in need of his gallant protectorship, he would lift his appealing brown eyes to us with an air of unutterable reproach for his unnecessary disturbance, and drop to the floor with a huge sigh, perhaps to try again for a few quiet winks. Life with him was no longer dull or lacking in color after Thursday became a member of our house-

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hold, but was full of rich and varied interests for every waking hour, which were many more than formerly, as it was only under the greatest difficulties that he could get even half of his accustomed hours of greedy sleep through the interrupted days. Of old, his choice of pleasant places of repose had been the shady back porch, where he would stretch himself at full length, his velvety ears lying broad and flat, and he still indulged himself in this chosen spot, although under difficulties. For Thursday had soon learned that to snuggle close to his curly coat meant warmth and comfort, but not for the dog, for it teased and worried his naps dreadfully to have her cuddle so close. However as he seemed loathe to surrender this adopted spot, his by "right of domain," he was most gentlemanly and patient, never even saying "bow." When sleepy time came the kitten would boldly hunt his resting place and nestle under the softness of his downy ear for her siesta. Feigning sleep, his nose between his paws and one eye half-open, the dog would bide the time when she was fast asleep and then, most cautiously and carefully, draw himself away in order to have his ear to himself. Little Lonesome, feeling the want of her comfortable covering, would sleepily creep under his ear again and the setter would again, with touching resignation, watch his chance and get away. This exchange of courtesies would go on until the dog evidently realized that he might as well give up and let the little wilful torment have her way. Or there might be times when he would get his

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lazy self up and off, but even this manœuvre might be only temporary relief, if the kitten still longed for his companionship. Never once was the dog known to growl or fail in politeness, even when the kitten trespassed on his hospitality to the extent of selecting such dainty bits from his dinner plate as pleased her fancy. At such times he would stand by, big and stern, wistfully watching the choice pieces disappear, and patiently wait until she had finished her selection and was seated on her haunches near by, washing her little black face, before he would presume to take that which, in her gracious indulgence, she had left for him. In this elaborate ceremony of her toilet, she would sometimes pause, and with a kind of pensive wondering, gaze at her now greedy host. In this attitude, with one tiny paw raised meditatively, and her mouth half-open showing a bit of pink tongue between her gleaming teeth, she looked as if actually smiling in supreme affability on an attendant chamberlain. At all times, the attitude of affected condescension assumed by this mite of a kitten toward her big gentlemanly comrade, was so absurd as to be very funny.

And so the summer and fall months passed and the dog and kitten grew in friendship and intimacy and were an endless source of interest to the family. Unfortunately for these pets, the country home was soon to be broken up and closed for the winter. Thursday's devoted friend and protector, the setter, was sent to the hunting lodge, and a home was provided for the kitten with a friend who lived only a couple of miles away.

1927
CALIFORNIA



THURSDAY

AS SHE NEVER ATTAINED THE FULL
STATURE OF AN ORDINARY CAT, SHE ALWAYS
LOOKED BUT HALF GROWN
BUT WAS THE VERY PERFECTION OF DAINTY
SYMMETRY, HER COAT A SOLID
BLACK, ALMOST BLUE
IN ITS DEPTHS

THE
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CONGRESS

THURSDAY

The girl cherished this little darling kitten which she had rescued, devotedly, and was very sad at the necessary parting, but never dreamed for a moment but that she would be the only one to experience any regret. She thought, of course, that the heart of her apparently frivolous little pet would readily accept the new conditions without a homesick thought, as it meant the same kindness, food and shelter to which she had been accustomed, and to leave her alone at the country house was out of the question, as it would be to risk letting her perish with cold and hunger. So the kitten was carried to the home of the friend and left, with a big heartache but, as the girl thought, only on her part.

The next day through the telephone came the report that Lady Thursday did not take at all kindly to her change of residence, but expressed a decided dissatisfaction with the new order of things, scorning all food with a painfully injured air, staring straight ahead in black misery, ignoring everybody and all overtures in the way of coaxing, petting and comforting. Every means possible was tried to make her feel settled and as happy as a kitten ought to be in such a good home, but all in vain. Late in the afternoon this bonnie wee bit of homesickness appeared at our door, looking so pathetically small and weary, but still determined, that it made the tears come just to look at her. She was as quiet and demure as an injured saint but there was an anxious wistfulness in her big pleading eyes that went straight to one's heart. She evidently realized

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that she had transgressed the law in eluding the vigilance of her keepers, and in running away, and her trembling little heart was thumping a wild tattoo. But her mental and physical rapture at being in her own home once more was glowing in triumphant satisfaction in every movement. And that she had been shrewd enough to find her way back all by herself in a road where there were no sign-posts a cat might read, but only scent for guide was also obviously a source of great self-congratulation to her. This demonstration of preference on the kitten's part for her home, and for her, was a surprise to the girl and touched her heart, for she had not thought her saucy, independent little favorite capable of such deep appreciation. It was so evident that this obstinate little pet objected to this change of abode that it was with the greatest reluctance that the girl felt forced to send her back again. There surely could be no mistaking the small queen's sentiments in the matter, for her manner was so haughty and reproachful. It might be a lovely joke her perfidious family were playing on her, but they had made a sad mistake, if they were serious, to think for one moment she would condone such treachery or that she would tolerate the other house as home, even for one day. She bestowed a royal "not-to-do-it-again" sort of threat on all, but in spite of her scathing remonstrance, she was told of the absolute need she had of another shelter, consoled and again carried to the distant home, rather than be allowed her stubborn way and left at the deserted country

THURSDAY

place to take her chances against starvation and neglect.

This time the little black visitor was shown special attention by the rather indignant friends of the girl, and more carefully guarded. If she showed a tendency to wander, she was made a prisoner in the hope that she would soon forget her former home and accept the inevitable, which from their point of view, was certainly very nice. Although the kitten was unnaturally patient and seemed to look upon their soothing efforts with a desire to be soothed, time showed that she remained, through all, unmoved in purpose, proving that in her apparently indifferent and trivial nature there were depths that had not been suspected.

The great master passion of home-love and, for a small cat, a tremendous wilfulness were developing in her sturdy little body. She would not be reconciled to this new home but was slyly on the alert, constantly devising all sorts of shrewd ways in which she might cheat her keepers and gain her end.

One day toward evening, their vigilance being somewhat relaxed, owing to her seeming submission, she managed to escape. She had been very crafty in her "seeming submission" as it had evidently been only a subterfuge, for she showed she had not been vanquished by any manner of means, or even discouraged by the delay. All the time she had seemed so sad and passive she must have been only biding her time and opportunity, scheming all the while desperately in

THURSDAY

feminine ingenuity to outwit her jailors. When finally she was rewarded, and the instant she was free, she went scampering down the path, through the timberland, taking by instinct the "short cut" which was the nearest and straightest way to the one place on earth to her, each bounding step keeping time to the homesick beat of her heart.

Oh, poor, plucky, obstinate morsel of a kitten! If there had only been some kindly hand to have turned you back; turned you back from that demon, hungry and savage, lying in wait for you in the narrow path through which you were sure to pass! Oh, that there had been some Spirit of Pity that cherishes the kittens, to have had a saving compassion on you!

But on sped the flying feet, with eyes blind to all but the one big home-impulse that was giving her the courage of ten. All grief, disappointment and heartaches forgotten as the old friendly place grew nearer and nearer. Down through the valley and up the fatal hill, racing as fast as she could go on the ragged path, clearing brambles and ditches and fallen tree-trunks with flying leaps, turning neither to the right nor the left, going straight for home. Panting and throbbing she finally reached a tiny roadway among the briars and undergrowth, a narrow trail seldom used except by small fur and those in a hurry, like Thursday. Faster and faster she went exultingly on through this shadowy thicket to the next descent, and deeper and deeper into the depth and mystery of the woods, where loomed a silent murderer, set in rabbit land for the unwary, which

THURSDAY

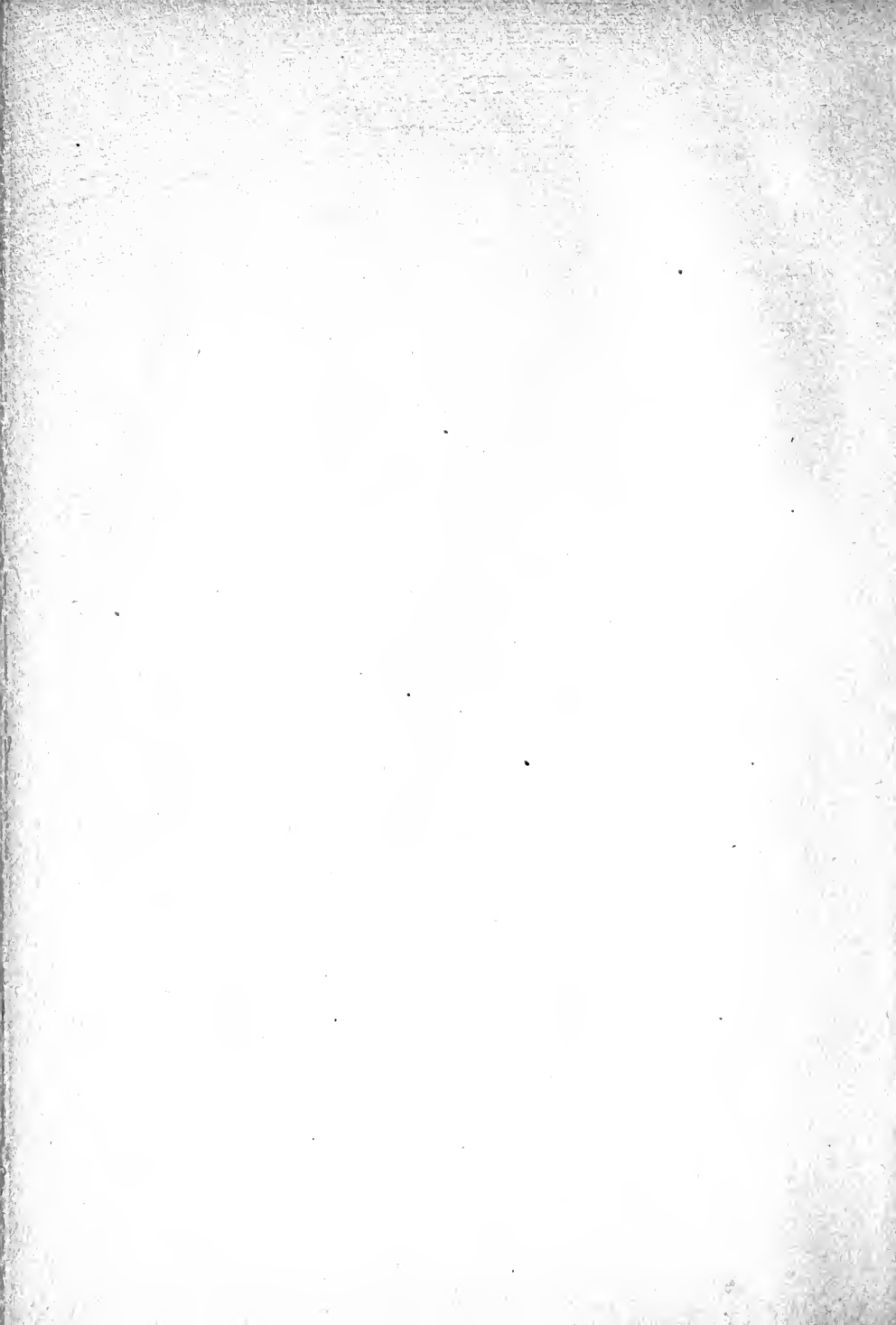
had marked this little pitiful victim to clutch in its fatal curve.

Have courage, little Thursday, and turn back. Oh, in mercy turn back and save yourself from the horrible fate of this half-concealed shadow so near to you now! Or, halt an instant and go round this deadly trap. Home is so near, only a little way now. Home! Home! almost in sight, in answer to the burning desire in your heart. A sudden stop! The twinkling of a black shape twirling in the air, and the path is empty!

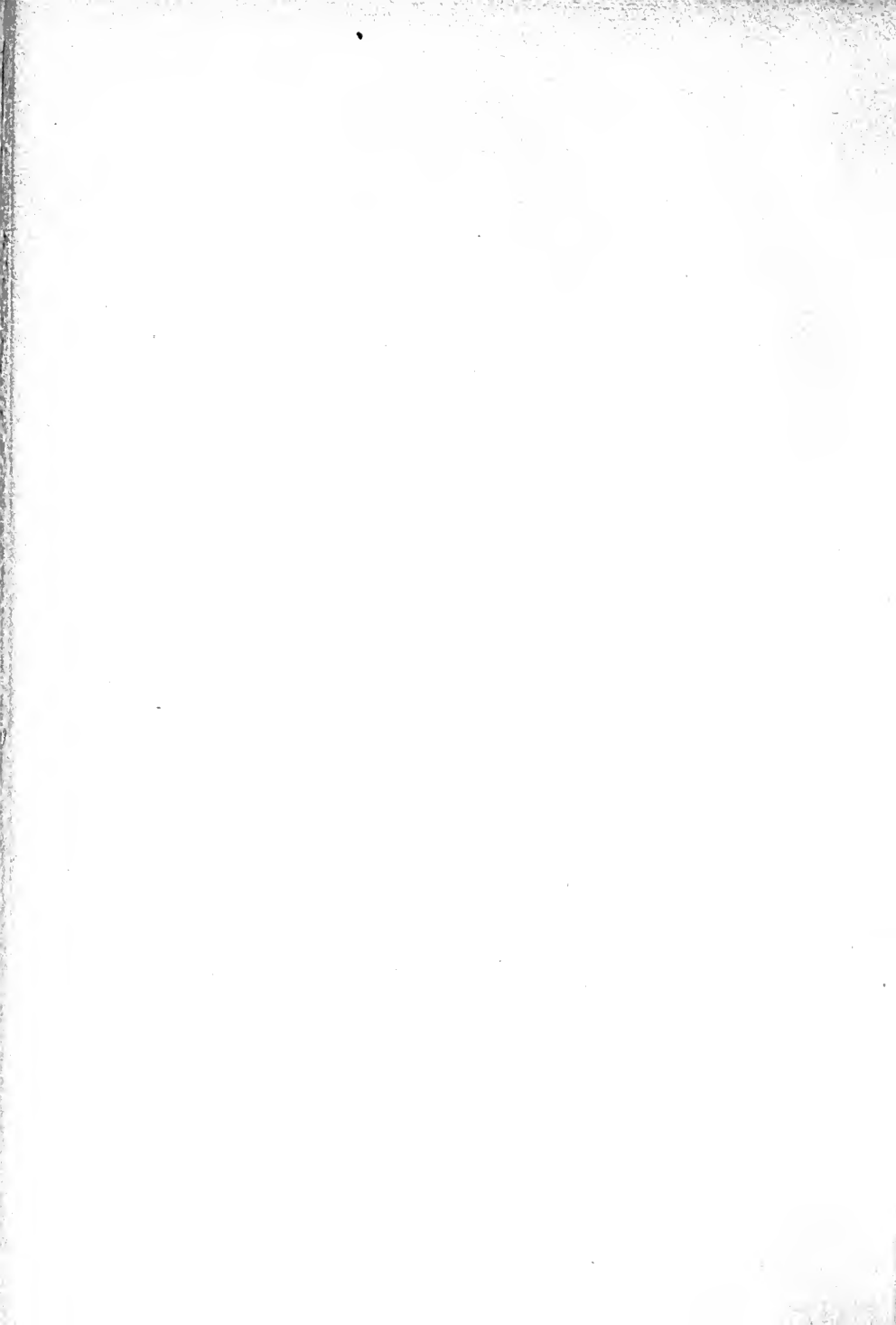
The deadly grip of the cruel wire has borne Thursday home in a flash.

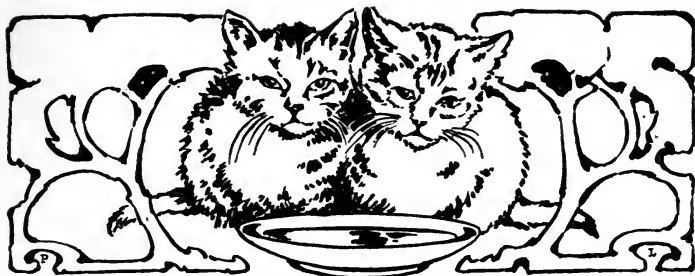


**A MINE, A MINER, AND
A CAT**



**A MINE, A MINER, AND
A CAT**





A MINE, A MINER, AND A CAT

THE mining camps of California in the days of '49 are full of romance and history and any man who has once tasted their free independent adventure can never more escape the influence. The gambling chance which every miner took in those fascinating days, is continually tempting him again to the old life. This charm, which that most merciless Enchantress of the California Hills casts on all alike, is unfathomable, and grips the mighty as well as the weak. The quest of gold, which rewarded some and eluded others in those days, still has a grappling temptation to every man who has once been under its spell. To the pioneer Californian, it is a summons forever luring him to that old battle ground round the big shaft where the sky is big and it feels good just to be alive. You will find that the old-time miners forever chafe in the dullness and conventionalities of any humdrum existence along commercial lines, and for any slight excuse will exultantly take the wide tramp road that leads

A MINE, A MINER AND A CAT

to what they call "God's own country." They are found ever eager to give body, and soul if necessary, joyously, in the intoxicating excitement this fickle sorceress holds out to them in the game of chance which they think *must* win in the end.

One of these sturdy relics of the early days in the golden west, after years of struggle and vain trials to settle down into the drudgery of precarious success in trade, grew tired of waiting for the miracle of prosperity to even begin to happen, and was in despair. In his blue discouragement those dream ghosts of the happy mining days were ungovernable in their insistent presence and pulling at his heart strings with an almost visible and steady line.

Long ago when he first came to the west, in the mad rush after gold in '49 he had been one of the "pardners" to locate and work a certain claim. In the fever and scramble of making a fortune in a minute, and expecting to pick up handfuls of gold with little trouble, this company had become discouraged at the slow profits yielded by this claim, and had abandoned it upon the report of much richer discoveries farther on, he following with the others. During all these years that he had tried to settle down into steady, legitimate business a haunting certainty had grown in his mind that they had been too hasty in abandoning this mine. The remembrance of a promising lead, which had been discovered in one of those hustling days and which, in their breathless hurry for big lumps, had not been followed faithfully enough, and consequently had been overlooked and

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forgotten, obsessed his present gloomy outlook until it could no longer be ignored.

One especially desperate day, when affairs had been unusually irksome, he sat down in dejection and thought deep and hard on this inward and tantalizing urge to the old mountains. Immediately following this quiet hour with himself he gave up the effort of trying to succeed in his present uncongenial work, and throwing discretion to the winds, yielded in glorious abandon to the call in his blood, ringing too loud to longer oppose. Fortunately there were no ties of family or responsibilities other than business to shake off, so shouldering his pick and shovel, treasured through all these years, he joyously started with his chin up and his back straight, for the splendid freedom of the old familiar hills. His destination the long abandoned claim hidden away in the far-off wilds, where there was a chance, sure, and no one had yet, as far as he could learn, discovered the "lead."

He determined to go there again, to work it alone this time, and to be deliberate and to stay with it until the hills *did* deliver up to him their royal secret. To this miner-man it meant life, real life, health and above all, freedom, with a big chance of a fortune. If it were a fool's folly, he would gamely take a "flyer" and abide by the result at any cost.

So this strong-handed, broad-shouldered man, big in heart and big in soul and a lover of the silent places, in answering the call of his old miner days, set his hopeful face toward the great moun-

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tains and the days to come, in reckless venture, with only faith, a pair of strong arms and a pick and spade to help him solve the problem. It is a well-known fact that these men going into the wildness and loneliness of these rugged heights, cherish a cat as indispensable to their camp life; as important an addition to their "grub stakes" as beans and coffee. And so intimate do these two become under their isolated, and often desperate conditions, that an almost human friendship and affection springs up between them.

At the last trading post nearest the mine the man planned to "outfit" and to secure a four-footed partner. The cat he thought would be so easy that he never gave it a second thought, but on his arrival at the little town busied himself packing and getting everything in light transportation order for the "return horse" on the morrow. These arrangements off his mind, he got very busy in looking about for the last requisite, a cat. His intentions in regard to acquiring one were perfectly honorable. He would beg one if possible, buy one if necessary, but he must have a cat at any price, not only for its company and usefulness, but in accordance with all past traditions of mines and miners. There were cats and cats a plenty in this little mining town, clinging to the rough side of the granite hill, but, as it seemed, none to spare. Not one to give away and not one to sell, and he might as well have tried to barter with the air, as no price or accommodation could induce any one of them to part with one of their precious little beasts,

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and he was in despair. After strenuous hours of vain persuasion, which had eliminated the question of choice or price in regard to the cat, he had gone to the public house for supper, exhausted and out of patience, but none the less determined on having the desired "partner." The early starlight found him sitting on the dark veranda, solitary and alone, pondering the cat question, not as to spots or breeding or even a cat, but as to which, and how. He must have a cat and these people being the last resort would have to furnish it at whatever cost. With his chair tilted back, his hands deep in his pockets and his face turned heavenward he seemed to be looking at the stars for inspiration, and from the short, quick puffs and lively glow of his pipe, it was evident he was thinking hard. After he had finished his smoke in silent cogitation with the sky, he seemed to have settled the difficult problem to his satisfaction, for when he rose to "turn in" there was the gleam of a slow smile on his rugged face. Knocking out his pipe and brushing the ashes from his breast, with a huge yawn, he stretched his arms up over his six feet of length, hardening his muscles for the morrow, and sauntered indoors for the few short hours of rest in a bed, which luxury he allowed himself as a grand finale to civilization.

In what seemed to him but a moment later, it was the next morning, and throwing aside the blankets he was up and out in the chill gray dawn without disturbing any of the household. As the eastern sky lightened the purple mists, he trudged

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cheerily along under the frosty twinkle of the receding stars, his back to the dusty little hamlet and a triumphant smile of contented satisfaction beaming on his happy face, turned toward the gleaming snow peaks of to-morrow. No one would have suspected this big happy tramp of having an infamous secret on his conscience or have surmised that he harbored a wee felony snuggled closely inside of his outer flannel shirt. As he had been in somewhat of a hurry in committing this crime, he had not been over-scrupulous in selecting any particular kind of a cat. Still, as he was at last in possession of a live kitten, a something he felt he could not have faced the solitude and silence of his lonely camp life without, in sweet content he would never be critical. This victory in the small matter of a small cat, attested well for his future, showing that he had resources and skillful ways of his own in circumventing an adverse fate, and that he was made of the stuff that wins in the end.

Just as the white mountain peaks, far above the timber line, caught the first pink glory of the coming sun, the man with the light of hope in his dark eyes, reached the foothills. He crossed the first low divide, and in the sheltered ravine beyond stopped beside a tiny trickle of snow water, flashing gently down among the boulders, and made camp for breaking his fast. Here for the first time he took from his bosom the scraggy little treasure for which he had risked his honest reputation, and which had safely slept, curled in its snug quarters, all the way.

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The very first act of the astonished small tenderfoot on this rather rude awakening and introduction, was to make a wild dash for liberty, which came near being a total eclipse of their acquaintance. It was only after a very lively chase, in which the man had to hide his terrible anxiety and to use the utmost patient cunning, that the frightened little animal was captured by his more than frightened mate. In the quiet moments that followed, when they were sizing each other up by the comfort of their little friendship fire, their intimacy began. In admonition his baby highness was given a serious and profound lecture on the futility of having such independent ideas as he seemed to possess. The poor little motherless captive looked meek and helpless enough beside the big man, and in this big unknown world, his great baby eyes glancing and searching about in vague apprehension; but although he was terribly puzzled over the situation, he was finally brought to reason and to the straight and narrow path of obedience.

With a firm and tender touch, electric with love and sympathy, the man stroked his prize, answering the questioning, luminous yellow eyes so steadily fixed on his own dark ones, with a gaze of such mysterious power and assurance that the kitten sat charmed, with curling paws, the wonder-stare melting into one of understanding and implicit trust, that was to be lifelong. So comforting was the man's trick of hand and voice, that this trying moment ended forever all controversy as to doctrine or discipline between them.

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From that momentous time on, as long as they lived together, they fought out the grim battle in moments of importance, as of one mind. Already the touch of his master hand and the sound of his commanding voice had taken tight hold of the baby heart and held it like magic, and as the kitten grew in wisdom and caution he learned to trust this big man more and more, as one who understood and sympathized.

In resuming their tramp, the rougher country began and the trail was a puzzle. The man could not find even a ghost of a track, as he worked his way through the thick masses of underbrush, for it had been years since anybody had traveled this way. But mile after mile, crossing cañons, over small mountains, up and down, in and out, the hardy pioneer picked his difficult way across the trackless country, going straight, guided by a miner's mysterious sixth sense, which is an instinct enabling him to see things and read things to which others are blind.

Toward the last of the daylight, on the second day, these tired tramps, the man footsore but with unwearied spirits came upon the small clearing of the old mining camp of the halcyon days of '49. Once it had swarmed with eager, buoyant men, but now it lay deserted and wrapped in solitude. In great exhilaration they took possession of the one and only remaining dilapidated shack, standing, dark and doorless, silhouetted against the fading light. Nobody had been in this forsaken place or probably thought of it for years and years. In its prime it had been a rather

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pretentious cabin of the regulation kind built of logs but was now only a suggestion of its former grandeur. Hordes of small furry tribes were "holding down the claim" and using its shelter to rear generations of their kind. The fireplace, with its great outside chimney, built of mud and rocks, was standing intact, the smut of the old log fires still clinging inside where myriads of bats had hung their nests against its sooty walls.

The new arrivals took possession of this old-timer under a torrent of abusive, squeaky protest that sounded very much like "cussing," this intrusion into their domain being highly resented by the present tenants. But the strangers had come with a purpose, and to stay, so took possession of the hut as with a flourish of trumpets, making preparations for the night, scattering the scolding families to temporary hiding, and anticipating no end of fun in banishing them forever to their own territory. In time the miner settled down into a daily routine of business and pleasure, with only the cat and the solemn and magnificent trees for company. He was wholly happy in getting the cabin into living order, delightfully systematic in regulating the primitive housekeeping arrangements, and shamefully contented with the homely result, but always on the lookout for golden possibilities. He was not conscious of a dull or lonesome moment in the heavenly largeness of the pure mountain air, but every day was one of stirring fascination to him in the thought of what might come with the next turn of the shovel.

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The great peace and majesty of the California mountains, glowing in their summer fulness, was marvelous to the city man, who had been aching for these exuberant heights so long. The crisp keen air was like wine in his veins and made his blood tingle. As he bared his arms with cheerful determination his whole being thrilled and he struck and dug into the flinty rock with a strength born of a faith, that however he might blunder, the gods would be kind and he would come to his own in the end.

Each wonderful day was followed by another as wonderful, the weeks speeding as lightly as homing birds. If there were troubles that sometimes seemed dark and dreadful, and difficulties hard to overcome, the two were happy, the cat being the very heart of the camp life and living on the most intimate terms of love and equality with his devoted master in the leveling process of their primitive life. The kitten had grown into the utmost splendid stature of his race, going from strength to strength, being all muscle and nerve, unusually broad of chest, looking as if bred to the mountain fastness and able to endure all sorts of pioneer hardships. His baby coat was now thick and silky fur and was growing more glossy and beautiful every day, so that the man in his pride gazed upon him with an eye of rapture in the possession, and felt sure that in his successful raid into the enemy's camp, he had unwittingly stumbled on something beyond the common kind. Handsome, shining and saucy, he was wonderfully wise and cunning for a cat,

CALIFORNIA



THE CAT

THE KITTEN HAD GROWN INTO THE
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having no equal in the chase. The vain little creatures of the forest, grown bold and reckless and almost fearless during the years that they had been unmolested, did not have half a chance, and learned that they must exert their utmost to escape this cruel forager.

It was in the evening, when pick and shovel were standing sentinel in the corner and the chimney sending its curly blue beacons of comfort toward the sky, that this wonderful "pardner" of the miner shone in all the glory of his domestic virtues, giving the rough cabin the grace and semblance of home. This evening hour bestowed happiness on both the man and the cat, and marked the very height of their goodfellowship. The man, his day's work over, steeped in the tang of the pine logs roaring in the huge fireplace, was at rest and at peace with all the world, puffing voluminous clouds from his pipe. His drowsy friend, too, was filled to the heart with the warmth from the ruddy logs and, in blinking satisfaction, would occasionally relieve his overflowing gratitude by low throaty murmurs of blissful content. These tranquil hours by the fire certainly atoned for many hardships, and feeling such a glow of nameless satisfaction in the snug, solitary enjoyment of them, the thankful man was more than compensated for all the sacrifices he had made. Being a willing, self-imposed exile, he felt that his blessings were more than he really deserved.

In the narrow cañon at the base of these mountains, closing it in on both sides, was where the

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miner was following the old lead in which he had so much faith. In the rocky bottom grew scraggy fir and pine trees and in the crevice at the very bottom, a little stream hurried along, a trifling affair at this time of the year, but in the winter assuming the proportions of a raging torrent, as it was fed from the great volume of water that fell from the heights above. Here the miner washed his "pay dirt" at the "clean up," and it was also the cat's happy hunting ground, for it was the home of the wood mice, chipmunks, squirrels and other "small deer" nutting among the pines and going their ways boldly and busily, thoroughly intent on the business of living and making a living.

The cat roamed these wilds freely, foraging unchallenged, exploring with eyes and nose every tree, hollow and boulder, for he, too, was a practical, busy cat, making a living, as he had to work out his own salvation in this respect. He certainly had the right of way in this world of forage, and the thrifty little bodies that in the days of abundance would prepare for a day of need, had to be very wily as to where they laid their stores, for the cat would nose and ferret out their most secret hiding places.

One morning the miner, taking his dirt to the ravine, found the cat vigorously digging in the loose earth at the opening of a gigantic fissure in the rocky peaks, a fissure that led in gradual ascent, its sides sheer and steep, to the peaks above. So intent was the cat on his quarry that he did not notice his master's greeting, but kept

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the dry earth briskly flying to the right and left. The man supposed, as a matter of course, that he was on a scent and had cornered some game in its den, and in careless sympathy thought to help him out and struck his shovel deep into the loose earth. As he turned the heavy load he gasped, for he found it freighted with sparkling metal. He rubbed his eyes in wonder, dazed with astonishment, looking first at the cat now sitting demurely by with a satisfied air, as if he had done his part and then at the twinkling scales of gold blinking up at him as he shifted it through his shaking fingers. This sudden realization of the hopes of all the long hard years and the past months of active search, staggered his faculties. In a bewildered way he fingered the gravel in his hand, and wondered if it could be that he had "struck it rich" this time; if so, it was surely this prince of cats, either by chance or luck, that had proven the cleverer prospector of the two.

He followed the deep narrow gulch on and on, up and up, not for an instant suspecting the marvelous wealth it would reveal. He was lured on by frequently finding deep and rich pockets of yellow ore, mixed with water-worn loose rocks and dirt, which evidently had been collecting in this rough trough for a million years, washed down from the steep sides and many peaks above and around.

When night came down, shutting the cañon in absolute darkness, it roused the man from his golden dream with a start, and he straightened his bent, aching body and mopped his hot fore-

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head. His first thought was for the cat, totally forgotten through all these absorbing hours, and an instant of self-reproach for fear he had not followed, but had gone back to the cabin at the usual time. At his startled call the neglected cat came rubbing his comforting presence about his feet, showing that he had been faithful all through the long day in which he had not been noticed. This God-sent lucky chum, that had brought him the great good fortune, had unmistakably an air of triumph gleaming from the depths of his great black pupils, and his beautiful sleek body assumed an attitude scandalously near a swagger, as if waiting for this opportunity to presume on his partnership in this affair, to advise his master that they had better be getting home. The miner instantly recognized the justice of his impertinence and caught him up in his arms, and they camped right there where they were through the short, starry night, hugged close.

At the first faint glimmering of day, the miner and the cat found their way back to the cabin. The man had pulled himself together by this time and had his nerve steadied back into its wonted control and his brain normal, in good working order. After his night's rest, in which the calm had returned to his overwrought imagination, he was able to meditate reasonably on the good fortune which began now to assume definite shape. To convince himself past all doubting, he drew from his pockets the yellow proof. There was no doubt about its being the real thing and he

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lifted his hat in gratitude to the cat, for this little prospector had certainly opened up for him the best lead in the whole country. The magnitude of what this developed was more than he ever dreamed could be. It seemed to him that all the gold that God ever gave to the world was in that one gulch, and there it lay unappropriated from end to end. It was like an Aladdin's fairy lamp, a gift of the gods. Millions were there and all there was to do was to pick up the yellow lumps. How this golden placer could have lain there, hidden in the sand and gravel of this fissure so long undiscovered, was a mystery that baffled even the miner's most profound attempts to conjecture. He had simply to accept his good fortune with a glad heart, as one of the favored caresses of the Enchantress of the Hills. His luck in being the "hundredth man" was, he claimed, all owing to his wonderful mascot, that in a time of desperation he had just gone out and annexed. His mate shared sympathetically in the sense of well-being in these great days of success, and must have realized, from the almost reverent homage that was accorded him, that he had played some very important part in winning the game.

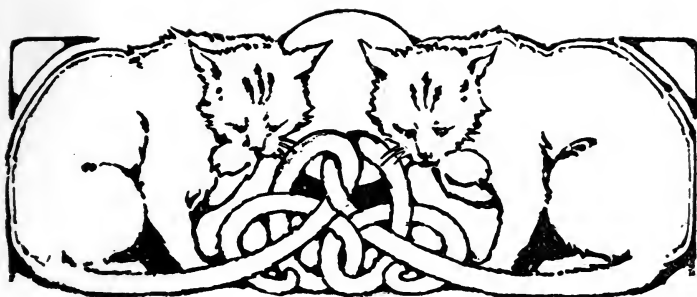
And the partners linger and linger, rejoicing in the big loneliness of this little paradise all their own, ever happy and without a care, their cheery hearts growing bigger and bigger in unbroken friendship. The miner knows that just "over yonder," beyond the purple twilight, is the busy world and that he can "clean up" and

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go back to things and the life of people of affairs at any moment. Yet he stays on, loving this life under the sky, of joy and independence, hardship and adventure, with its splendid achievement, too much to make any change in the happy order of things.

AÏDA AND SAADI





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THE contented purr of "Home Sweet Home" on the hearth, by a resident kitten, was the one touch of coziness lacking in our newly acquired country bungalow.

Seeing an exhibition of thoroughbreds advertised, with many for sale, a trip was made for the sole purpose of filling this pleasant need in our comfortable chimney corner, and so making our little ménage complete. On arriving at the crowded display rooms, where each cat's family ancestors were found carefully recorded, the problem of selecting the correct kitten, among so bewildering a collection of purple pedigrees, was a rather serious one. They all looked so fuzzy, chubby and attractive that we wanted them all, and it was impossible to decide on just one. After long and careful consideration, two babies were finally selected for their special beauty and daintiness, as the ones most likely to blend harmoniously with the crackle of our cheerful fire, and the singing of the evening tea urn in our bungalow.

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The homeward journey, with the tiny princesses carried carefully and almost awesomely, was one of suppressed, but anticipated triumph, in being the fortunate possessors of something worth while in cats and something that would doubtless become real blessings under the careful training and wise discipline we were already planning.

On reaching home and joyously throwing back the cover of the padded traveling basket, we found the expected excitement painfully lacking; there was no eager bounding of the released little captives as would be most natural in ordinary kittens, and which we had expected twofold in these extraordinary ones, not even a friendly mew—just an awkward silence, with two of the most pathetic, tired looking bunches of royalty staring up from the basket, with frightened eyes.

We gently lifted the scared, chrysanthemum-like blossoms of fur from the basket and silently but proudly placed them on the floor in order to display their blue-blooded points, that all might be properly awed. But even then, in spite of their beauty, which all acknowledged, they failed to make any sort of pleasant impression, but lay just as they had been placed, crouching almost flat in shrinking terror of their new surroundings. As they cowered there in cringing, pathetic helplessness, they looked like almost anything but kittens to be proud of, and the audience smiled incredulously, while I as their sponsor in momentary chagrin and contrition, wondered if, perhaps, in pride, I had not been too ambitious in

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making a selection of such royal daintiness. For, might it not be that the solemnity of such a long line of lineage would result in their being a terrible disappointment as mere kittens, and what we had planned on having was nice, fat, cheery, comfy playfellows. The poor small mites of big pedigree were certainly woefully depressing under the present strain, and at this rather inopportune moment it was cheerfully suggested that I might possibly have done better in my investment, and perhaps realized a greater profit, with the home-made "just cat" variety. But I ignored these sarcastic insinuations and would not be disheartened, for my treasures were of the renowned Persian species and I was still hopeful that the purity of the blood which circulated in their veins would yet prove its worth. Even to the skeptical, they showed that they were unmistakably the real article by an elegance of finish throughout, and that they were of the purest breeding, for their coats were unusually long, with soft, full, fluffy scruffs and little tufts of hair growing out of their thin pink ears and between their darling chubby toes.

At first it *did* seem as if, with their advent, a rather serious and unnecessary responsibility had been thrust upon an inexperienced household, for the risk in rearing these tender thoroughbreds was perhaps too great to assume without the aid of a natural parent. Fortunately for us, the melancholy period of their abrupt and rather shocking orphanage soon passed, and under our loving care the memory of mother gradually faded away.

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They grew and throve like plain ordinary kittens and soon began to frolic and take on the gladness of life, in spite of the deprivation of a real mother's cuddling and nursing.

As our acquaintance grew into one of weeks, we discovered that there would be no lack of entertainment, for the royal babies took life in doses of "doing things" most of the time. Surely no one could accuse them of being bereft of temperament, as we had feared, for they possessed an intense and heartbreaking inclination for excitement in various varieties all the time, quite enough to reassure even the most doubting that we were in no danger of not getting our money's worth in lively kittens. In fact the innocent infants' progress along the lines of cute and daring adventure caused daily and almost hourly shocks, as they seemed uncanny in resourcefulness and absolutely fearless in devising all sorts of startling surprises in the way of miscellaneous mischief, counting that day as naught and unprofitable which brought forth nothing new in the way of satanic curiosity and inspiration for getting into trouble.

The whole household fell under the spell of their charm and were their faithful adorers, the kittens being the deities before which were offered up daily homage, and all lent a helping hand in their "spoiling" as well as in their education. In no time, it seemed, they became quite accomplished in the understanding of certain words taught them in painful seriousness and were soon trained to ask for many little services with such

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charming and almost human ways as to have conquered the most obdurate heart, had there been any. They were wondrous wise and certainly marvellously clever for kittens, and we could not help being very proud and a little boastful of their achievements along kitten lines, as well as of their strikingly elegant appearance. There was nothing commonplace about them. Even their wild and hilarious playfulness was high tragedy, having such concentration of energy in it that, as they grew older, it developed into a big bump of bad, bold destructiveness. Also, time proved that they possessed a decidedly feminine and insatiable love of investigation and a tragic thirst for information, especially in natural history.

This swelling protuberance of inquisitiveness as regards the earth and its various productions of feathered creatures was taking them nearly every day on long excursions into the near-by woods, often keeping them absent for hours at a time causing us growing anxiety as to their safety. As this trip to the woods became an almost daily after-breakfast custom my curiosity was roused to such an extent that I determined that I, too, would stroll forth the next morning to contemplate nature, and if possible, incidentally discover the fascination that was keeping the infants so much from home. The suggestion that they might be even looking at the little birds with evil intent, made me indignant; it was unbelievable those ingenuous eyes could be so guileful, yet somehow I shivered with a vague premonition. Resentfully I argued that they were too young for

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such cruelty; moreover they were of such royal blood, princesses of their kind, that one could hardly imagine their doing anything so scandalously plebeian.

However, the next morning, with secret and rather ominous forebodings, I sauntered away in the bright May sunshine, through our old-fashioned garden and up toward the woods, two small downy puffs bounding along by my side as lightly as if blown by the wind, their round little eyes like shining suns in their tiny fluffy heads. They scampered aimlessly, far and near, their heels a-tingle with mischief, poking their noses into all sorts of out-of-the-way places and having a lot of terrifying experiences, getting frightened at everything that could possibly be made into anything scary. They were so seriously determined on investigating all alluring possibilities that not a moving thing escaped their vigilance, from the bees in the bushes to an aeroplane that flew overhead; nor would they have failed, if possible, to help it along with their paws or turn it over and make it go the other way. Occasionally they would stop and scent a flower or perhaps glance warily about, Indian fashion, pretending to see nothing, but raising their eyes with a sweet pretence of innocence to the trees, especially, I noticed, if there happened to be a twitter among the branches. In fact, they appeared to think there was something truly wonderful about those trees—the plain ordinary green ones with the usual number of fine feathery limbs in which the birds love to rest their wings. Further than that,

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however, their conduct was absolutely blameless, and as we all scurried home I was comfortably convinced that the matutinal walks of these dainty elegances were simply due to an overpowering longing for the green things of earth and the fresh air, possibly from the tree branches, but just the love of being out of doors, with a special desire to enjoy the wonderland beauties of our own woody range, in which we ourselves took great pride.

While still in their tenderest baby days, the kittens developed such an ardent talent for clinging together in all their activities that they seemed like two branches swayed by the same breezes. It was more than the usual natural bond of kinship, even between twins; more like something prenatal, as if one thought instigated all their doings. They ate together, walked together, snoozed together, and were never separated; to see one was always to see both, and everything that happened took place in pairs. They breathed one common atmosphere of trust and faith in each other. Their little feminine hearts may have been often false to us, but to one another they were always faithfully loyal, enduring with unswerving devotion in this oneness everything good or bad that was theirs to share. In living mischief and in the joy of their great discoveries, they were always as of one mind. Ever frolicking together in the sunshine of happy days and generously sharing the sorrows of this vale of tears on hard ones. As one galvanized body, they went through kittenhood in good and bad ways, suffering and enjoy-

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ing in the everlasting bond of an alliance offensive and defensive.

Their good qualities were so many, and their allegiance to the entire household apparently so faithful, that it came as a sickening disappointment when a little murdered bird, the result of their prowess, was brought and laid at my feet. After this there was no further mystery or doubt as to their inward viciousness, and that it was pure murder-lust just for the delight in the killing was shown by their never once offering to eat their victims. Sometimes they would bring them home and simply "lay them away," and sometimes leave them, all bloody, under the trees. Feeling that I was the one most responsible for the morals of these little heathens, and the one most blamed for their wickedness, an ardent missionary fever began to burn in my indignant blood, and I secretly determined that there should be one hand, strong enough in love, to at least discipline this scandalous feature in their otherwise gentle breeding. If our little aristocratic babies could not live in friendship with our feathered beauties of the woods, they should be forced by some kind of vigorous training to leave them in peace; for we loved the little birds, and their sweet songs in our woods, too much to be reconciled to any such disloyal warfare upon them.

It was with a sinking sensation that I sadly and quietly followed the marauders one morning as they stole off for their usual "after-breakfast" diversion of seeing things in the woods. I was firmly resolved to find out how and where the fledg-

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lings were captured and cut off so untimely in their innocent careers and took good care that the kittens did not see me or know that I was waiting grimly in hiding until I could catch them red-handed, and there could be no mistake.

At last my time came, when the degenerates were both crouched near a tree, with wide open, flaming eyes cruelly set on a little chirping songster. Then as they crept forward with eager desire and all the cunning stealth of plain, common, feline ancestry, and were just ready to spring on their unconscious game, I burst upon them in such a frenzy that it frightened them into a state of absolute dismay. But before they could feint, the pair of abject and convicted criminals were hustled back to the house in terrible disgrace, and, hardening my heart, such discipline and argument was administered as was deemed expedient.

Naturally better things had been expected from such beautiful, saint-like looking cherubs, who did not have to make a living by their wits, and this depraved, red-flame blood lust in their being was a double surprise and disappointment.

Under surveillance, these injured innocents became very artful and sly and would resort to all sorts of deception in order to avert suspicion. If caught loitering about their favorite hunting ground, the hypocrites would dally about in gaping pink yawns of boredom, in the most indifferent manner, or play Jack and the Bean-stalk by darting madly up the trunk of a tree and chasing their own tails down, just to show that joyous exercise

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was the chief, and in fact the only reason for their fondness for the woods. There was no doubt but that they understood perfectly their transgression, and if they were discovered in the delirium of the hunt, we faithfully did our dark and dreadful duty. But they took their discipline so meekly that it was simply heartbreaking to see their tiny, shrinking little bodies after such rudeness, hiding in out-of-the-way places, with terrible fear in their big scared eyes, that were wont to look up at us in such love and expectancy. The touching resignation of these tiny criminals under our correction made us feel almost ashamed of our power, especially as they seemed so superior to it. Moreover it did not seem to make any lasting impression, nothing resulting from such painful experience to both, in the way of reform, that could be detected by the naked eye. But, as we explained to them over and over again, if we had only been able to correct this one little evil in their hearts and make them half as penitent and guileless as their beautiful, remorseful eyes looked, our pains would have been rewarded by their becoming the very best of citizens.

Bearing so calmly and patiently our severity, as if suffering an injustice, they fortunately, bore no malice in their baby hearts and neither punishment nor disgrace could suppress for long their indomitable spirits. Although they acted for the time being as if their hearts were broken, smashed beyond repair, as soon as it was deemed advisable for consolation to be administered, they were coaxed back to life and soon were as fearlessly

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and beautifully happy as ever, trifles of this kind passing as a little summer cloud in their otherwise blue sky. From their humble resignation they evidently took this peculiar morality on the part of big mortals as being just one of the mysteries included in their cup of experiences in this queer world they were trying to fathom, but in which they had expected only sunshine.

There were times when they escaped vigilance and, in spite of the retribution which we surely had impressed upon them would follow as inevitably as a shadow, they would abandon themselves recklessly to their one dissipation and we were helpless before their defiance.

These disgraceful pets of ours were known to come back from such gory adventure, unshamedly, with the blood of their victims still wet on their lips, telling the horrible tale without apology. After such a stirring incident they usually seated themselves very close together on the porch steps, singularly calm, their two hearts beating as one, their little pink noses at the same angle high in the air, in that habitual attitude of "united we stand or united we fall" which was always and ever their bond of fellowship, and simply await unflinchingly for developments. If an accusing finger was raised at these demure hypocrites, their meek expressions were simply angelic, as if they were just waiting for halos. Under threatening and closer scrutiny, they would sanctimoniously lift their round, reproachful eyes and insolently lick their impudent chops as if scornfully saying:

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"Oh, lady, you surely do not suspect *us* of having seen your birds this morning?"

Their innocent and demure air was positively exasperating and we were in despair over the prowling slaughter which made our hearts ache. In the stress of many other affairs, however, we feared that we would be obliged to give up our strenuous watchfulness and let these murderous little beasts pursue their deadly war on the feathered tribe as they willed, when one joyful day we discovered in the column of "What others have found out," a permanent remedy.

A quiet resolve was taken and another trip to town, and now these dainty little aristocrats go about in quest of experience with gleaming collars about their throats, upon which dangle little tinkling bells, so that they never escape the music which gives warning of their approach. From their look of appeal and almost of terror when these warnings sounded the first alarm, I imagine that it has lessened their confidence in the kindness of mankind and taken a great deal of joy out of the world for them.

Ordinarily they submit to the fatalism, looking bored to death, but there are occasional lapses when their fighting blood struggles and they are excited almost to madness by the everlasting jingling. Then, again they will sometimes lift their appealing eyes in hopeless despair to our unyielding authority, opening their mouths as if to make a feeble protest in tremolo, but in their guilty helplessness, failing to utter a sound. But as no miracle of love happens in the way of re-



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"OH, LADY! YOU DO NOT SUSPECT
US OF HAVING SEEN ANY OF YOUR BIRDS THIS
MORNING?"

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lease, they have become of necessity philosophers, and though doubtless they would give the world to be rid of these tink-tingles of law and order that follow every movement, they are martyrs and have learned, even in their brief experience of life, to make the best of the inevitable. The longer their residence in this world, the greater their education will be concerning the mystery of a higher power which arranges things so as to baffle a helpless kitten's best laid pleasant plans, even kittens with marvellous bushy tails with a double kink in them.

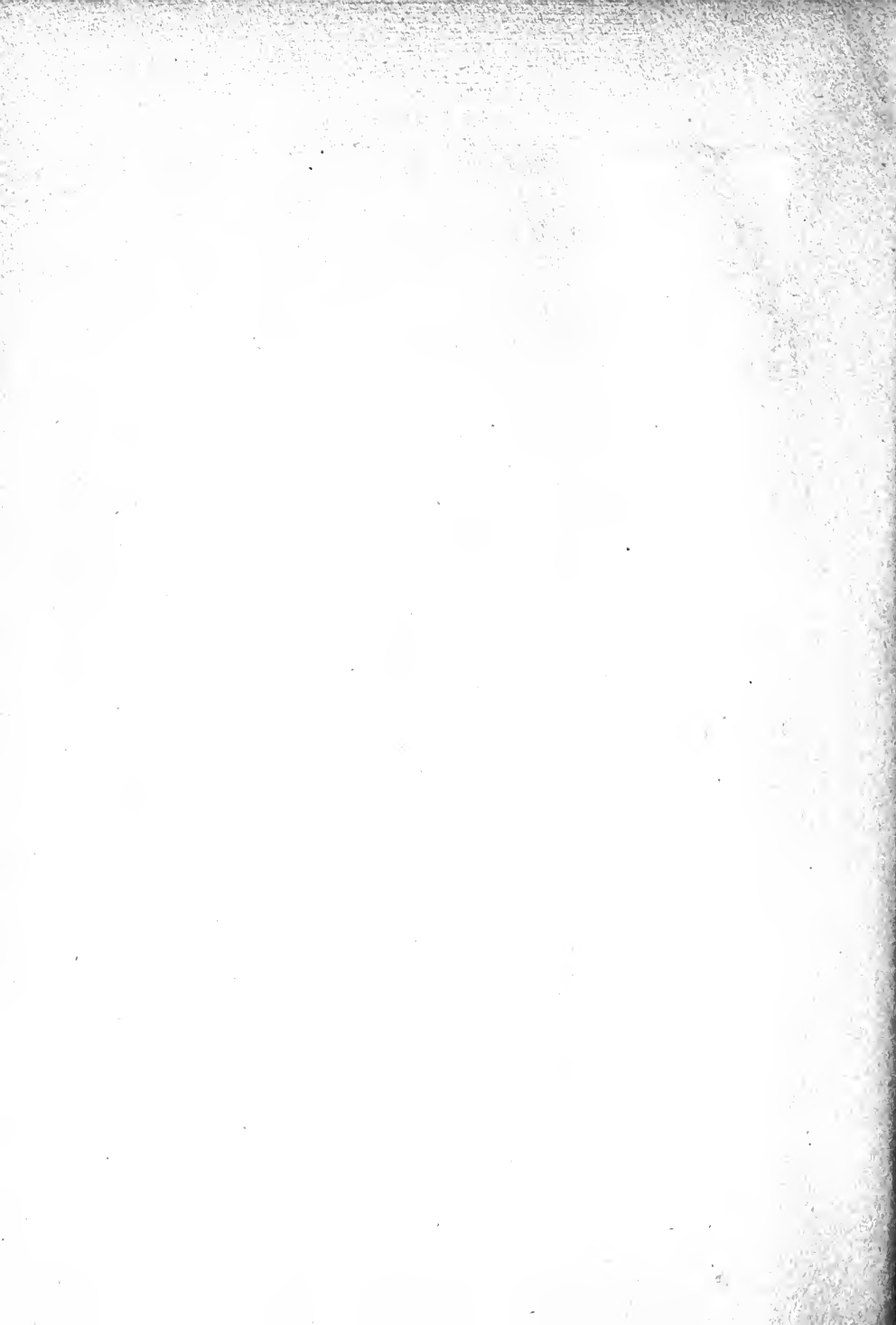
Nothing so completely subdued these incorrigibles and hurt their pride, as a horrible catastrophe they once inadvertently brought upon themselves, which came near being a tragedy. It was the first time in their play paradise that they ever met with absolute rebuff and it completely subdued them for the time being. One hot summer day, on coming in from one of their tramps abroad, very warm and very thirsty, they caught sight, both at the same instant, of a basin of gleaming, tempting, creamy white paint, which a careless workman had left standing there for a moment. Mistaking it for milk which doubtless our thoughtful kindness had prepared for their thirsty coming, they uttered a little flute-like duet of thanks and made a rush to their fate, side by side, as the animals went into the ark, not stopping for even a smell, so unsuspecting and great was their confidence. Down deep went their little aristocratic noses into the sticky mass, so deep they could hardly extract them!

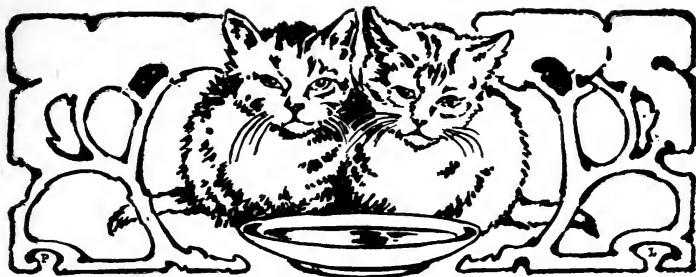
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We were very sorry for these foolish, self-confident little victims and they were very sorry for themselves. A strange, unwonted calm fell on our bungalow, and it was really one of the saddest times for all, humans as well as kittens. Until the paint wore off their faces and whiskers, it was an interval of quiet, in which there was no make-believe humility, but in which the culprits were really bowed to the earth in shame and with indigestion.

Truly, it is a hard world for even innocent little sinners!

MAROONED





MAROONED

IT WAS midsummer and the city sweltering in an overpowering heat wave, but in the country there were cool retreats and a fulness of verdure that were calling with enticing insistence to all the suffering city-bound folk to come to their bounty and rest. To one weary country-bred woman, the alluring summons sounded clear with a healing message to her tired nerves and jaded brain. It was the seductive call of the big blue sky and the pure air of her own old-fashioned country home, and her whole soul responded with an intense longing. But she was one of the city's plodders, chained by the inevitable to the treadmill, and she could only picture in her hopelessness what such happiness might be, by straining her misty eyes in memory to years gone by.

She stood by the one window of her own room in that big lonesome boarding house, apparently gazing idly out on the bit of sun-baked street her limited view commanded, but she had closed her eyes and was totally unmindful of the last hot

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slanting rays. Her whole being was enthralled by that "back home" call that was stirring her heart. She was so utterly tired of the heat of walls and pavements and the city's seething rush and endless clang, that her eyes and brain seemed bursting and her very soul cried out for that restful spot in the country she still called home. She knew how sweet and still the misty woods were "back there" in the soft twilight of this hour, and how the air was damp and fragrant with the scent of the tangled undergrowth. In homesick longing she recalled the blessedness of the evening glow of the setting sun trembling upon the hills of this girlhood's home in its parting benediction, leaving a sabbath-day stillness on all the land. She could still hear the musical tinkling of the bells on the lowing cattle, as they ambled home from the pasture, in the lengthening shadows, filling the air with the rich warm breath of the hot clover they had been feeding on. These homey, country memories were like a fresh delightful breeze blowing on her burning heart and opened up entrancing visions which stretched far back to happy days when there had been plenty, and no need of battling with the struggling crowd of the city.

Under the thrilling delight of these crowding memories, she was for a few blessed moments transported to this home of her desire, and the sweetness of it nearly broke her heart. With a sigh, however, she remembered the present and the throbbing glare of her surroundings, realizing how worse than foolish and how hopeless was her

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discontent with things "that are." Impatiently she lifted the heavy hair from her hot forehead and winked back the stinging tears, and was just about to turn resolutely from the window to take up the practical things of life, with a brave make-believe, when she caught sight of two big, round, gleaming eyes looking up at her from the dejected little garden beneath her window. There was nothing very striking or attractive about these eyes except their resolute intensity, and that they belonged to a very small cunning kitten, sitting with all four paws tucked under his body and his tail wrapped neatly about him, patiently gazing up at the window with concentrated wistfulness, hoping for recognition. As he caught the lady's tardy glance, he gave a cordial and friendly mew without moving a muscle of his body and, as there was no response, another mew. This time the lady, longing for the companionship of anything alive, could not resist a grateful and hearty return of his friendliness, and throwing the window wide open, she invited him to enter. Instantly, with a clever spring and a curious twist of his legs, he landed on the window ledge, clear of the garden below, and was caught, with a soft little cry and cuddled tight with the warm downy fur against her cheek, in a frenzy of overwhelming delight.

Every one knows that a city boarding house is no place for pets, and in this particular one there was a law, as of the Medes and Persians, rigid and inflexible, that there should be no dogs or cats. So it was with a guilty, beating heart

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that she revelled in even these few stolen moments with this dear little comforter that carried her back to the days of her youth and the days when there were always cats—and cats aplenty. When she released her little visitor from her arms, he sniffed about the room, reconnoitering every nook and corner, as is the fashion of cats, and after a thorough and careful inspection of everything, settled down with a mew of approval into his favorite position of rest, all four paws under him, having evidently decided to stay. But the lady knew, and feared, and confiding to him the restrictions of the place, gently placed him on the window ledge, telling him to scamper for his life into hiding. He dashed away at breakneck speed and the lady thought he was gone forever. But to her surprise and delight, on returning to her room after business hours next day, there was Mr. Kitty sitting on the ledge outside her window, in his favorite position of “warming his toes,” as if by previous arrangement. Of course he was invited in, snuggled and fed. Fortunately the lady’s window was in the back of the house, in a rather secluded corner, so she could carry on these clandestine meetings without discovery.

It grew to be the regular thing, that the kitten should be there each night, sitting just outside the window like the Peri at the Gate, patiently waiting for his lady’s return. In this way he laid such persistent siege to her heart that she finally had to surrender, permitting him an established place in her home and in her affections, but under certain restrictions. Although there was the im-

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passable barrier of expressed thought between them, he could look into her eyes and wistfully divine her desire. In this way he quickly learned that it was only in the evening that he could be admitted into the brightness of her society, and even then, only with the greatest caution. After he had once grasped this mental warning he forever after honored it with the most careful consideration.

An evening came when the tall, thin-faced captain, with the winds of many a sea on his cheeks, was in port, and the indulgence of his long-established habit of calling on the lady in the boarding house. The anticipation of these regular visits had lain in the sturdy captain's heart until it had blossomed into a cheering romance and he boldly dreamed, during his lonely night vigils, of a possible fireside that might sometime be kindled and waiting to welcome him on his return from his voyages. This little "comfort beacon" he was building in his mind made his stays in this port of great consequence to him. But the heart of the lady was a port of happiness the captain had not yet been able to invade as it was not a sailor's life that the lady thought she would like to share. Some day, somehow, she hoped to return to that happy land in the country she remembered, where she would pitch her modest tent and live forever after, happier even than the proverbial fairies. But the big, courageous captain was gentle and generous in loving, and willing to wait.

On the captain's first call after reaching port this time he found the kitten duly installed as a

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permanent member of the evening circle, and on account of the lady's evident partiality for her favorite, he being always anxious to please her, tried to make friends with him. To the lady's surprise, the cat persistently eluded the captain's demonstrative wooing. Perhaps it was instinct that told him of a certain jealous impatience in the captain's heart that he should be there taking so much of the lady's attention; or perhaps it was because the captain offended his dignity by teasing him, in a friendly way, by pulling his tail; or perhaps it was just because he called him "pussy," which to any civilized cat must be rather galling.

Anyway, they did not seem to get along together at all nicely and on the captain's evenings the cat developed a decided and hitherto unknown kink in his temper. He would wait for and submit like a gentleman to the captain's rough stroke of greeting, but that was the limit of his politeness, and any familiarity beyond this would bring a wicked gleam to his sea-green eyes and an ominous thud of his tail.

The lady felt their mutual irritation and thinking to interest the captain in her pet and to smooth their rather stormy friendship, told him of the kitten's great fondness for water, a very unusual trait in cats, as they generally dread getting even their feet wet. She told how this cat really dissipated in water, loving to play with the straggling lengths of the garden hose and in the puddles it made, often getting himself thoroughly drenched, and sometimes even played at swimming

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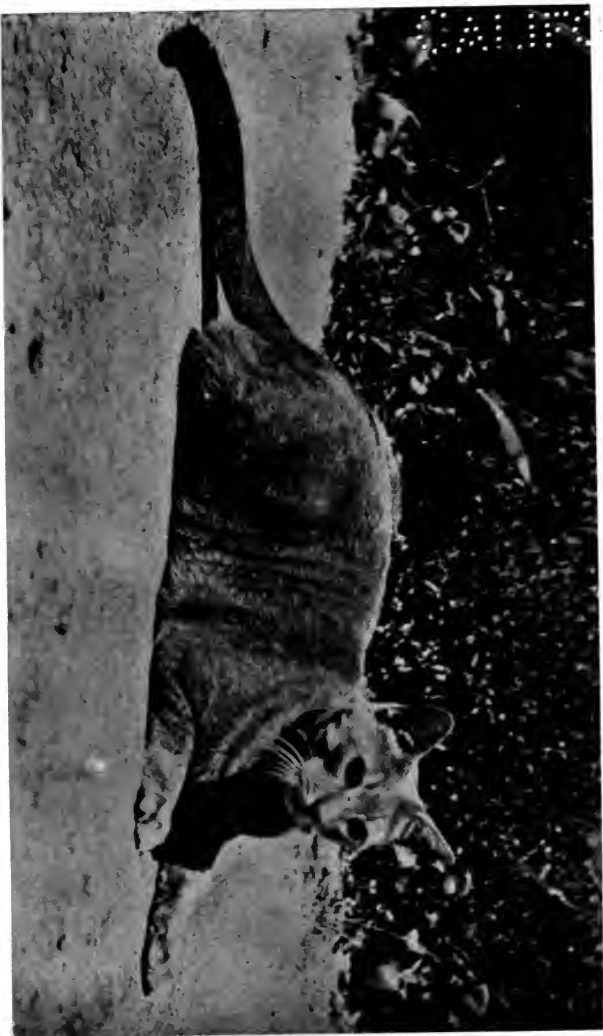
across a shallow pool until he came to some high place where he could perch and dry his bedraggled self. Having such a bond as their mutual fondness for water, they ought by right to be the best of friends, she said.

When the time came for the captain to sail again, to the lady's great surprise, he begged her to let him have the kitten for a passenger, telling her that they needed a mascot on board ship. He assured her that her "best beloved" had just the special qualities to make a dandy sailor, and loving the water as he evidently did, would doubtless take kindly to the life.

The captain hesitatingly pondered in his heart if the time were ripe to ask for another passenger, the one in all the world whom he thought would make life's voyage sweet and complete, but he instinctively felt that the lady would not have it that way, and in wisdom asked only for the cat. Secretly she wondered why the captain had asked for the company of the cat, as they plainly were not greatly attached to each other, and selfishly she wanted to keep this dear little friendly kitten all to herself. Yet there was always the secret of his unlawful transgression on forbidden territory and the fear of discovery; and more than all, the heartbreaking fact that time, over which there was no control, would bring him the misfortune of becoming just a big, homeless, skulking city cat. These considerations, and a desire to provide a good home for her pet far away, reconciled her to the separation, although it gave her a big heart-ache to think how she would miss him.

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So it was arranged that the captain should have his mascot. On the day of sailing the lady herself took him to the ship, as she wanted to be quite sure that he was carried aboard gently and safely and that he was induced to stay there with as little fright as possible. She was also glad to give the captain this little flattering attention of a last good-bye and *bon voyage*, which hint, if the poor captain had not been too downcast at the parting, might have made him feel that perhaps he had been a little too timid in asking for only one passenger. When at last she cautioned him, with a pitiful little break in her voice, to have patience and use only gentleness with this trusting, helpless little shipmate she was so basely betraying, it came near bringing about a climax. As the devoted captain held her small hands clasped tightly in his strong ones, a burning flood of love flushed his cheeks under their coat of tan and his snappy blue eyes blurred, as he solemnly swore, in a voice not quite under control, that he would be ever faithful to her admonition, to her, to the cat and to anything she held dear. Had there been time, in his almost overpowering emotion, the candid mariner might then and there have ventured his fate. However, the tension of the instant passed, and in the confusion of the last few moments there was not again time or opportunity for tender words, especially as the lady's whole attention seemed taken up with the cat and in solicitous anxiety as to whether he would be contented and develop a liking for skippers and a skipper's life. So in the final moment of clashing



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NEITHER
DISAPPOINTMENT
NOR
UGLY TEMPER
HAD BROKEN
HIS FIERCE SENSE
OF INJURY OR
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SPIRIT

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bells, splashing hawsers and the settling down of the engine to real business, the last flickering farewell was only a quick grasp of hands, which somehow seemed to carry with it a new hope, and the call of "all ashore," left the captain's heart still fluttering with only the next time to look forward to.

It was a very sullen kitten that the lady had left on the lower deck after the last desperate squeeze she had given him. As she turned to take her last look back, there he sat on his haunches, as motionless as an Egyptian mummy, amid his new surroundings, but game, maintaining a lofty dignity to the last in spite of perplexity, dismay and wrath.

As the great ship swung clear of the pier and turned her clean-cut prow toward the mists of the ocean, the lady wiped the blinding tears from her eyes and waved her handkerchief bravely as a last admonition to the cat, and in adieu to the captain, who was now in command, alert and busy, all sentiment forgotten.

All on board a sailing vessel, from the captain down, love pets of every kind, but during the first hours of the ship's getting under way, when all is confusion and bustle and everybody busy with the ship's important affairs, there is no time for trifles. Naturally the new passenger was forgotten for the time being and left to his own devices and for the ocean to do its own work with him, in its own way, until things had settled down into the daily routine. When this time arrived, the cat was past all overtures of any kind and

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occupied exclusively with his own resentment, the anger of his betrayal having by this time entered too deeply into his being for him to accept any kind of peace-offering. He was insensible to all caresses and disdained all offers of friendly acquaintance, and from the rank rebellion brooding in his gloomy, unforgiving eyes, it was plainly evident that he was not enjoying his ocean trip. Although he had soon found his sea legs, he had also found *en route* a very wicked temper in thinking over the injustice of the situation, shanghaied and deserted in this heartless manner.

The men, now that they had the time, tried in every way to make up to him but coaxing of all kinds proved of no avail, the awful bitterness of his injury making him immune to any sort of cajolery, and he treated them all with a calm and persistent air of scorn. They tried to tempt him with every kind of cat dainty, but in an attitude of sullen hostility he would have nothing to do with them, venting his ill-temper on all alike and confining his dependence in the eating line to the cook, who merely threw him scraps. His angry resentment was too deep and too hopeless for any comforting; he merely wanted to be let alone, if he was doomed to stay in this dungeon, and to live his own sullen, desolate life, in resenting *everything*.

His former freedom among gardens and roofs made the limitation of even this big craft, a miserable home for one of his outdoor habits, and although he had all the ship's mice for diversion, there was time and time for thoughts deep and resentful. As he was unconfined

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and had full range of the ship, on an early tour of investigation he discovered a porthole, always open to the sun in possible weather, which seemed to attract him, as a light will draw a traveler, lost in the dark. This he decided on as his favorite resting place during the day and the sailors, knowing that he had become fully accustomed to the monotonous swaying of the boat, and in consideration of his strong prejudices, let him take possession undisturbed. Here he would sit and "let his mind work" in brooding abstraction, gazing by the hour in wide open revolt at the gray blankness of the sea, too dreary and hopeless to sleep. Perhaps it reminded him of other times and of another window where he had been wont to sit in happy anticipation of the coming of his lady. However it was, this window had a strange fascination for him and day after day, when he was not roaming drearily about the ship, he would sit here, a sad still-life study. With wide, unwinking, gloomy eyes, hour by hour he would follow the broad expanse of the desolate waves to the empty horizon, eating his homesick heart out in grim endurance of his fate.

One awful day he was caught unawares and his career came near ending tragically. The ship, without the slightest warning, made a sudden lurch and he was unceremoniously tumbled out of his resting place with a splash, into the waves that were racing along the smooth black sides of the ship. An alarm was immediately given and in five seconds everyone on board knew what had happened. The captain received the information with

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a few sailor expletives, nautical and to the point, and growled something about "not being worth it," but ordered "all hands to the rescue," and the middies responded valiantly. One, more venturesome than the rest, without pausing to count the odds, stripped and leaped boldly into the dangerous depths. The rest of the crew hung breathless over the rail, watching their comrade make his desperate struggle with the buffeting waves, which sucked at every ounce of his youthful will and strength. There was an instant of sickening suspense when he sunk straight down clear out of sight. But quickly his head shot up again above the swirl of water and as he shook the brine from his nostrils and eyes and struck out powerfully with his arms, there was seen between his teeth the motionless cat held fast by the neck. The small boat was lowered and the hero was picked up and helped aboard.

The cat did not show a symptom of life, as they laid him on the warm sunny deck and applied "first aid," and it looked for a time as if the shock to his nerves and the long salt bath had done their worst. But the determined mettle of this hard-shell spirit was not so easy to extinguish and as life surged back into nerve and muscle, and he struggled back to consciousness, they found he was there with all of his nine lives wide awake and still in good working commission. One would have thought that after such an appalling doom had all but closed in on him, he would have appreciated his good luck and the true value of having such heroic comrades, and would have

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shown some thankfulness for the risk one of them had run to save his life. On the contrary, although he had learned to keep away from the porthole, a deeper gloom than ever settled upon him, and, taking this unfortunate accident as an added insult, he treated them all with more than his usual scorn.

The cat's peculiar characteristics of temper made him not only marked, but famous. The very independence and aloofness of his dull life made him tantalizingly popular with the young fellows, and in their leisure hours they were continually seeking him out to pass the time. They thought it great fun to tease him to furious anger and then laugh at his quivering rage, but after they had had enough of this kind of entertainment they would never let him go back to seclusion without trying their very best to coax him to good temper. They never succeeded in this commendable purpose, however, even with the most heroic efforts, and would have hotly resented any insinuation that their pastime might possibly be a cruelty. The captain, too, was guilty of loving to display the cat's tabasco-like temper, being quite proud of the strong personality shown in one so ugly and vicious and still one so delightfully entertaining.

During their ship's stay in an English port, the captain entertained on board a brother officer, whose ship happened to be in at this time, and teasing the cat until he exhibited his fierce characteristics was one of their chief after-dinner diversions. The brother officer was very much entertained by the captain's hospitable amusement

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and took a greedy fancy to the insolence and hardy independent ways of his extraordinary pet. He liked the animal so much that he coveted the mettlesome prize as one that would make things lively in dreary hours, and begged the captain to loan him for just one voyage; but the captain was indignant at such a proposal and refused to consider it for a moment. It would be breaking a sworn and solemn covenant with his lady, and besides, the cat was the pride of the whole crew, notwithstanding their raillery, and he, and in fact all on board ship could not get along these days without this important member of their mess, who was getting more disagreeable and interesting every day. Shameful as such baseness was, the brother officer watched his chance, and as his ship was to sail first, he had the advantage. The captain was wholly unsuspecting of his friend's secret intention and the first intimation he had of his treachery was when he went on deck to wave him farewell. As the brother officer's ship sailed majestically by the captain saw him, evil and smiling, on the bridge, and as he returned the captain's salute, he lifted the stolen cat in triumph in his arms. The captain stood rigid, the dark blood creeping into his tanned cheeks and leaping to his brain, while his keen eyes narrowed and scintillated with the glitter of cold steel as he watched the ship sail slowly past.

To this masterful seafarer, there was no sense of humor in the childish joke his facetious friend had played on him. At the moment he was too angry for his whirling brain to think out any

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plan to avenge this malicious injury, but he had always found himself commander in every situation and his nature was not the kind to forget. He swore with clenched teeth that he would get even with this traitorous fellow officer even if it cost him his life. The man was beyond reach of his wrath and strong arm at present, as he was sailing for distant shores, and with him the unfortunate cat. But the captain would bide his time, his anger growing with each hour, and there would surely come a day of reckoning in which it would be better for the officer had he never even dreamed this "practical joke."

This strange cat, unfriendly and militant, that had never shown affection for anyone since that horrible day when he had been so cruelly deceived by the lady on whom he had lavished his whole heart, seemed despite his every effort, to make conquests where he least desired and to be bound to lead a sailor's life to the bitter end, in spite of himself. This last outrage of fate roused him to desperation and took all semblance of civilization from his manner. It was war and no quarter from henceforth, with all the world against him. Big, strong, and full of salty battle, he certainly had not been stolen for a pet, and it would have made the lady weep could she have known the fate and seen the warlike wreck of her once gentle friend, although she would never have recognized in this belligerent, savage old salt, the kitten she had cuddled and loved.

These new sailor tormentors soon discovered that one of the cat's diverting peculiarities was a

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strong and expressed dislike to whistling. He hated the shrill notes with a hate that made him tremble and which seemed to rouse the very devil in him. Even the lowest notes would wake him from a sound sleep, and with angry, low, throaty growls, which sounded remarkably like swearing, he would make a sudden rush at the offender with eyes that flamed green, and gleaming teeth set as if he had a tigerish desire to spring at the man's throat and settle for all past insults, then and there. Once in the desolation of his soul, he *did* bite fiercely at his tormentor's shoe; and it would certainly have fared ill for any of them had he dared make a determined attack.

But the sailors, finding sufficient entertainment in the impotent, savage temper they were able to rouse, bore no malice in their hearts nor any animosity toward the cat for his violent dislike of them. So when they had teased him to the limit they would make all sorts of amends in friendly overtures, which were met with snorting scorn, and then indifferently allow him to go back to hiding, in peace. It seemed nobody's special mission to prevent this cruelty and the cultivation of all that was brutal and ugly in the poor outraged animal's nature or to see whether this continual tormenting were a real agony or if his habitual, infinite wretchedness were being made greater than necessary. It was simply a thoughtless love of diversion in which the helpless pay tribute to power. So in misery the endless days dragged into weeks and it seemed to the cat, so sick of sea life and sea smells, as if the world would

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never end. Although he was beginning to show the wear of his long, dull, sullen revolt, neither disappointment nor ugly temper had broken his fierce sense of injury or his indomitable spirit. Helpless as his position was, he never cowered before his adversary, but ever maintained an air of cool contempt and defiance, counting always on a chance. Every day on board ship holds unknown possibilities and always there is hope for those who watch and wait, and the cat's weary rage was waiting—slowly, silently, steadily,—but just waiting.

In the early spring, the ship ran into a rough channel and fell on continued evil winds which at last developed into a terrible gale. Wild, stinging wisps of salty wind came roaring right out of the north, flapping and bellying the sails and lashing the ship about like a plaything in a fury of wind and water, until, with rudder gone, totally disabled and helpless, it was being sent with each pounding breaker nearer and nearer the dangerous, rocky shore. The only ones to witness the screeching horror of this black night were two helpless old lumbermen, who had been roused from their sleep by the ship's signals of distress, and had run down from their camp to the pounding beach. But they were powerless to answer the crew's beseeching cries or to help them in any way, as they were alone in these wilds and had no means at hand of rescue. Through the blackness of the storm they could only imagine the distress, as they heard the roar of the heavy black demons, fighting the stubborn craft steadily with

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wind and water as if it were an evil thing which they were bent on destroying. At last, with terrible strength, as if impatient of this impotent play, the water rose in a tremendous wave, booming like thunder, took the battered fighter in its arms, lifting her high from the heavy sea, and flung her pounding on a jagged rock that held and crunched her with its cruel teeth like a hungry beast, scattering the splinters far and wide. The men, fighting to the end for their lives, were jerked and flung about like chips, their screams and prayers drowned in the roar and pounding of the storm, until the greedy sea once again broke over the rock and swallowed their screams and mangled bodies in a swirl.

By daylight the storm was over and the sea as calm as if there had been no tragedy, the surf beating steadily on the rocky shore its solemn requiem for its deadly passion of the dreadful night. The angry tempest had done its very worst and now the sun, so cruel in its brightness, danced joyously over the shining water, showing in the silver gray sheen of the sea the broken hulk of the wreck still clinging to the bald rock with but one sign of life. This was the rather pathetic figure of the sailor cat, sitting with his head high in the air, on one of the highest timbers, well out of the water, sunning himself, his nostrils dilating and swelling as they filled with familiar land smells. His overwrought nerves seemed wondrously calm under the harrowing circumstances, and in fact, on close scrutiny, there seemed to be a decided air of grim triumph in his

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lonely figure seen silhouetted against the vast expanse of blue sky and dancing waves. He had discarded entirely his sullen manner and one could almost see the hungry gleam of joy in his wide-open, level eyes, as they looked and lingered on the welcome sight of the beautiful world of grass and green growing things so near. This sweet and subtle fragrance blowing in his nostrils, sent its solace straight to his embittered heart and gave him the comfort and confidence that he would soon be one of the little furry creatures scampering in the woodsy haven. The steady throb and creak of the horrible vessel was no more, and he had at last been left free, once more to work out his own destiny, and his heart, in spite of his unmoved exterior, was thumping in triumph, and his whole body tingled with excitement. How delightfully safe, and steady, and firm, the cool retreats of this forest world looked to his sea-sick eyes! And over all brooded an enchanting silence, with no sound of everlasting machinery, just an occasional sweetly tremulous note from the blue above, and a chirp from the depth and mystery of the pungent land fragrance below, that could be heard above the heavy beating of the surf.

His heart bounded in response to the possibilities of this Promised Land of his long desire. But there was a wide space of flashing, angry, turbulent ocean between him and this secure, friendly world of plenty and enticing sweet-smelling shrubs: a hard problem and a fearsome risk for an ordinary cat and a difficult one for even

MAROONED

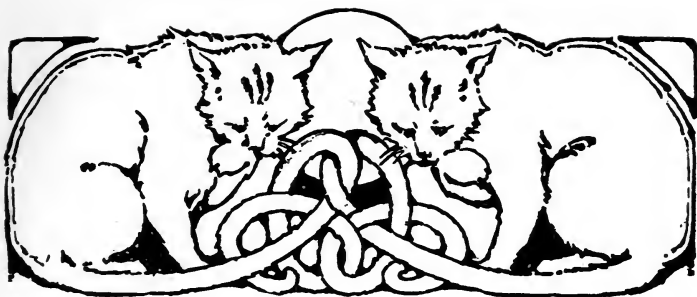
this desperate creature with his fearless nature and the proclivities of a duck. But in cringing fear of some further stroke of relentless fate, that might come along and rescue him enslaving him for another dismal voyage of excruciating experience, he determined not to be overtaken by any such horrible doom, but to make that stretch of water at any cost and to make it without delay.

He picked his way gingerly to where the water washed the timbers, quivering with anticipation, gathering all the strength of his big bones and tough muscles for a leap to the shore rocks, and then—hesitated! It was a deadly plunge and his heart was doing double quick in fear, but the compelling power of the near-by free range of greenness, with its sweet breath of liberty, fired him anew with the strength of despair. With a hoarse cry, that seemed to come from the bottom of his throat, and every muscle stiffened, in fierce recklessness he at last launched himself into the washing waves and all his whole-bodied, lusty youth was put into the life and death struggle. It is vouchsafed that some great mysterious power shall watch over and guard helpless animals, brave with desire, and it carried this stout heart, that would have died but for it, straight to the shore and back to the living fertile earth he loved, to live his own free life once more in the shadow of its satisfaction.

The cat had arrived in port at last and had thrown off the fetters of his tragic fate forever, going into the mystery of the wild, where no curiosity can follow.

MAIDA





MAIDA

IT was when Maida, a rarely beautiful Maltese, was about a year old that she became the mother of a collection of variegated little mongrel babies, with spotted fur of all sorts, except one, which was pure white. Maida was all mother, and very proud of this disreputably mixed progeny, but evidently especially pleased with the white one. Her preference for the milk-white blonde was plain, for she always picked this one out for extra care and scrubbing during the short time they were allowed to snuggle together in the nursery she had selected, which was a soap box tucked away in the back corner of the stable loft. But this is a cruel world for little unwelcome kittens and so it was destined that this shameful offspring should mysteriously disappear, and the natural instincts of Maida's big mother-heart be frustrated.

On the afternoon of the babies' third birthday, after only a short absence, the devoted mother came hurrying back in anxious care to the home box, to find nothing there but the thick straw

MAIDA

bed. There were no little bunches of soft fur to feed and cuddle not even one left to save her suffering swelling breasts. No one told her why or where; simply the cruel fact remained that she was desolate, her home empty, and her babies gone. Her grief over this heartless depredation, so inhumanly human, was painful to witness. Frantically she called in long-drawn, wailing cadence for her babies, from morning till night, in an agonized search. Up stairs and down, in and out, her mournful *meows* echoed, until everyone knew of her trouble, and even the most unsympathetic were indignant over the cruelty of it.

All of a sudden Maida ceased her mourning and settled down into quiet, regular habits again. Everyone drew a sigh of relief at her serenity and peace, but her mistress, more curious than the rest, determined to know the cause of her resignation and followed her to the loft. What she found there sent the cold shivers down her spine, for, snuggled to the poor mother's babyless breasts, were four small, ugly, pinky-white ratlets, with long tails and eyes like a Chinaman's. The consoled mother looked up at her mistress with beating heart and eyes straining with such pleading human anxiety that there was no mistaking that they held a challenge. But she need not have feared for no one with any kind of feeling could have the heart to let anyone interfere a second time with Maida's arrangement of a family however grotesque her ideas were in this respect. Where these shocking substitutes for her own unpopular babies came from, where they were

MAIDA

born and what had become of the rightful parent, no one but Maida will ever know, as they were the only descendants of this rather curious breed of rodents that were ever seen in all the country round. But Maida, the kidnapper, looked proudly upon them, doubtless as her one white offspring returned fourfold, and neither excused nor explained. If their advent was dark with a cruel deed, no one knew and no one felt that they had the right this time to deprive the aching breasts and perhaps a conscience-stricken heart of this compensation.

As the numerous rodents grew and began to take notice, they became quite troublesome to the anxious foster-mother, for they were wild little things, uncommonly healthy and uncommonly restless and rather fierce as well. Time proved however that they were the very best specimens of their kind, their baby coats bright and shining, their slim wee eyes clear, and their little noses alert with the most furious inquisitiveness. It was not long before the boldest of them could climb to the edge of the box on an investigating tour into the attractions of that little surrounding world of theirs, but Maida was ever on the alert, and in a twinkling would seize him and drop him in the box with a bump. Poor little ratlet would look scared to death and rather shaky, but Maida would gently lick him with her tongue, purring in the dulcet tones of a cooing dove, until she had him soothed.

The ratlets grew day by day into more independent and astonishing ways, and Maida's mis-

MAIDA

tress decided that this rather frisky family had better be transferred to more commodious quarters. So the rather unique nursery and household was removed to a large empty room over the stable, where they could have plenty of room and still be confined. Mother-Maida, doubtless feeling that she had troubles enough before, did not appreciate this freedom of a wider range for her lively children, and would have been glad had her mistress been less generous. Now it required double the effort to keep her strange brood from the tempting space about, and her strenuous struggles to restrain them within the prescribed limits of the box were sometimes painful, but always very funny. At times, in a very frenzy at their confinement the small rodents would bound, all in a white streak, one after the other, over the edge of the box and all over the room. Then poor Maida's maternal excitement and her efforts to drive, carry or frighten them back to their home, made pandemonium, the ratlets running helter and skelter in all directions and Maida after them. Catching one, she would jump back into the box with it, leave it there and go for another, but before she could make a capture, the one she had left in the box would be scampering in gay frolic with the others.

This rather serious game for Maida of "in and out" would go on until her nervous system was a wreck and she was utterly exhausted. Finally realizing that her efforts to subdue her riotously indecent family were useless, she would drop breathless to the floor, stretch herself in a streak



MAIDA
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MAIDA

of sunshine near the box, and survey the incorrigible mites with disgust. No longer pursued, the fun ceased for the youngsters, and they would come to where she was having a little interval of peace, and nip and maul, challenging her into another contest, playing tag up and down her tail, and indulging in other tantalizing pastimes, until even her self-sacrificing, long-suffering patience could no longer endure, and she would indignantly shake every one of them off, spring to her feet with a contemptuous *meow* of impatience, and seek another place for relief. Then the apparently conscience-stricken little rascals would meekly come, one by one, anxious and conciliatory, humbly begging her notice, scrambling solicitously over her, and by and by the four tired-out white beggars would be sleeping quietly with their sharp little noses snuggled in the soft fur of her body, all love and forgiveness.

Although animal children are generally supposed to be much better behaved and to cause their mothers less anxiety than human children, this poor foster-mother was kept very busy disciplining and training her strangely troublesome family. She truly mothered them, not as adopted aliens, but as the real thing, and taught them the proper things kittens ought to do and ought not to do, with much vigor and many a box on the ear; for generally what the rodents wanted to do, seemed to be just the thing they should *not* do in the progress of their strange education.

One day the closet door having been left ajar, baby ratlets in their search for mischief, climbed

MAIDA

way up to the ceiling and perched on the topmost strip that held the hanging hooks. Maida, on finding them so far above her reach, was painfully distressed, meowing and making the greatest kind of a commotion in trying to scramble up the smooth wall to their rescue, as she thought. The ratlets seemed to be heartlessly indifferent to her anxiety and had to be driven from their lofty roost by the mistress. The first one to land on the floor was grabbed by the enraged cat and given such a shaking that he wobbled about in dizzy unconsciousness for several minutes. The next one she caught with a firm paw, as he was scurrying back to the box, hoping to escape his punishment, and held him tight to the floor, in spite of his whimpering protest, till he was quite still. This one lay for a long time as if dead, but after a while he slowly lifted his giddy, swimming head and crawled patiently and sorrowfully back to his bed, and never again did any of these naughty babies attempt to break this strange law of a strange mother, by climbing in the closet.

Once a window of this room was lowered from the top, just a tiny way for air. Maida's mistress, happening to be in the barn, heard a great meowing and disturbance going on in their room overhead and rushed up to find her beloved cat racing about like mad, apparently frantic with grief and not a ratlet in sight. The lady was very much puzzled over this total disappearance of all four of the ratlets and imagined all sorts of things, even the worst, and started in to investigate. In her search, she happened to glance out

MAIDA

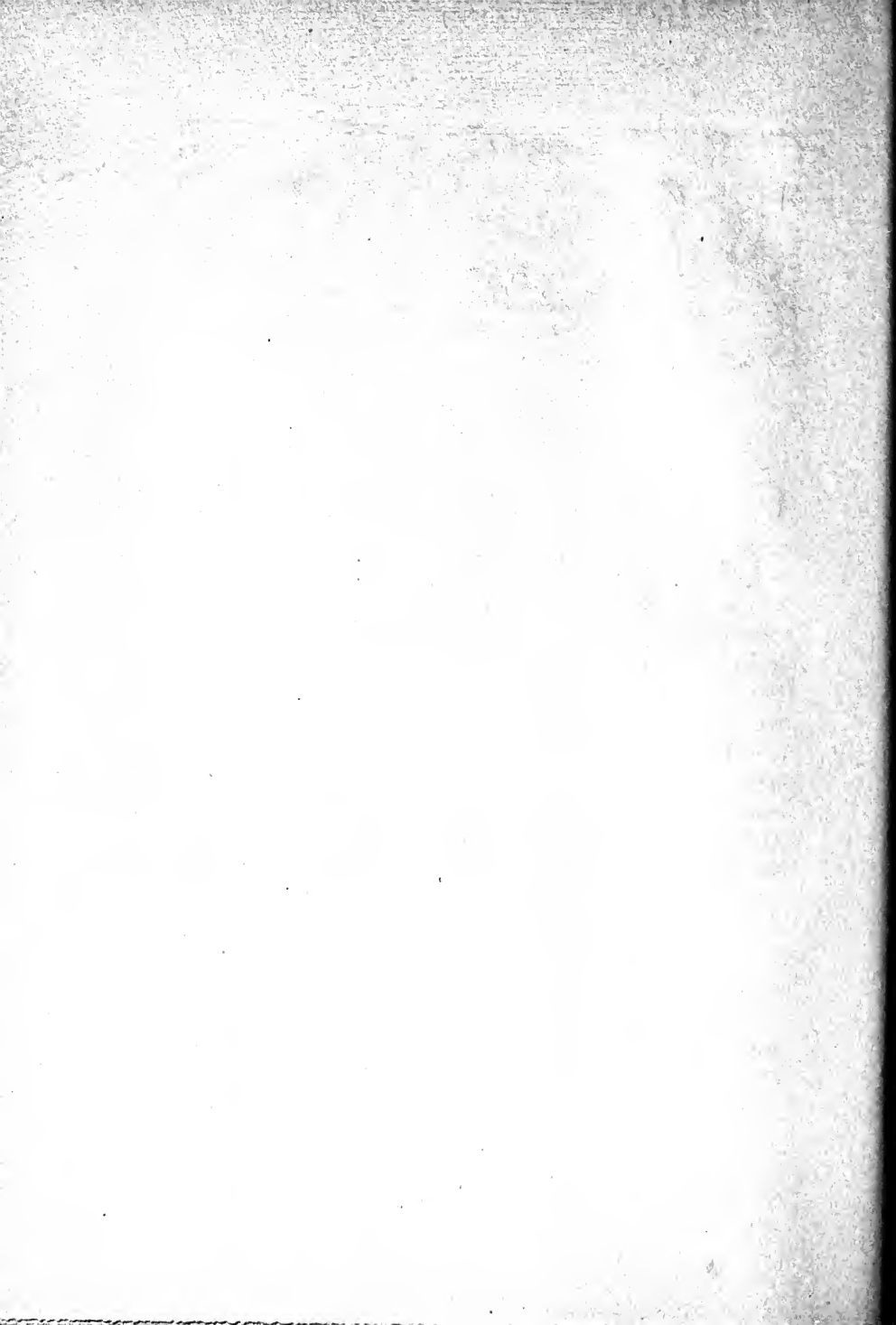
of the window and there on the roof were the whole bunch, plainly going mad in their unusual freedom. The weather was splendid and they were all out enjoying it, jumping and running on the separating wall in mad frolic, apparently just for the sake of falling back in somersaults on the roof, scuffling and doing all sorts of nimble acrobatics in reckless stunts, and surely making the most of their glorious holiday in the sunshine. The window was no sooner raised from the bottom, giving Maida a chance, than she dashed out like a flash, plainly determined on revenge. The instant the naughty runaways caught sight of her, they could not get back into the room and their box quickly enough; they raced for their very lives, stumbling and knocking each other over in their eagerness to get there, fairly shivering in their fright. Maida selected one poor pink-eyed, trembling sprinter for a thorough shaking and let the others profit by his sorrowful example, saving herself further exercise.

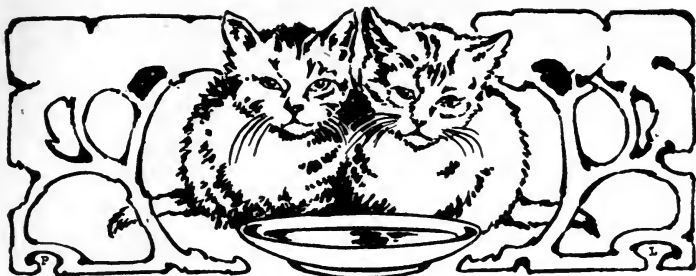
The ratlets lived to be independent, well-behaved grown-ups, with wonderfully polished and silky coats, owing to their frequent and thorough grooming by their faithful foster-mother, who seemingly never grew weary of her maternal duties or their companionship. They were great successes as rats, though doubtless Maida had her own interior disappointment and cat wonder as to why, with such faithful bringing up, they were not animals of a more comforting nature. Now she has real babies of her own, and this time there is no mistake, for their fur is pure

MAIDA

Maltese, so her mother instincts have been allowed legitimate vent. Her alien foster-children have the freedom of the whole country and, owing to their strange adoption and the zeal with which they were brought up in the way good kittens ought to go, they seem irreproachable in behavior.

A MEMORY





A MEMORY

ONE frosty morning, by arguing, reproaching and beguiling in turn, we coaxed from under cover of a heap of rubbish in the alley, one of the dirtiest yellow and white gutter kittens ever seen; one that had been eyeing us timidly and insolently from the safe protection of his smelly hiding place for several days. Gaunt, miserably hungry and shivering with the cold, he did not respond to our overtures of trying to make him a mite happy on Christmas day, with the eagerness one would naturally expect. When he did condescend to come, his steps were very deliberate and he carried himself with a certain sad dignity as if he had found the cold world hopeless, and had shut his young heart against all trust. From his manner it was more to politely oblige us that he came at all, than because he wished a merry Christmas or even our acquaintance.

By dropping our air of patronage and assuming a respectful one, we were finally able to cajole him to the doorstep and at last to the warmth

A MEMORY

of the kitchen and a saucer of food. Although he was not a bit shy, it was plainly his first introduction into the interior of any house. He was a typical alley kitten, and probably a graceless one, born in the gutter with no pretensions to breeding or even good looks. But with all this, a lover of cats could plainly see that he was not a common "yeller cat" but had a superior strain of blood in his veins from somewhere. Young as he was, it gave him a distinct individuality which impressed us from the very first. His short life had in all likelihood been a hard one; probably he had been abandoned in infancy and obliged to make his own living by depredation, and knew only the cruelty and insult of a homeless alley existence.

There may still be people in the world—civilized people—who do not care for cats, but we, liking all cats and fancying the calm dignity of this one in particular, were at once in hopes he would forsake his back-door haunts and come and live with us as our very own. As he looked wise enough to solve life's problem on almost any lines, we tried to tempt him to think seriously on all the comforts our home afforded and the life of ease and luxury it would bestow. We gave him feasts and promised him all sorts of other good things, if he would only abandon his former dissipated ways and stay with us.

He was always such a very serious cat, never seeming to have a kitten's natural playfulness, not enough to even chase his own tail once in a while as most kittens do. We never could coax

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him even under the most alluring temptation to be otherwise than grave and tolerant of our levity and as we had our little romps with him we called him in laughing sarcasm, "Jiminy Christmas." We had no idea of giving one so dignified this trifling name permanently, but he so quickly learned to respond to it, and as no other was suggested more appropriate in its place, it was gradually established as the regular name by which he was known.

He surely was a most welcome addition to our household and we tried to make him feel this and to know that we were honored by his stay. Although he was growing fat and beautifully sleek and was most friendly, graciously accepting all that we gave, but giving very little in return, we noticed that he did not seem quite content and at ease, but was restless, as if some previous and neglected affair were on his mind and calling him elsewhere. There was nothing that we could actually complain of, still there was something comforting and permanent that was lacking in his presence. He was good—at least, part of him was good; but we had no idea, as we came to know later, of that other part that was, well—not so good. At the time all we could see was that something was plainly fretting him, something chafing him almost beyond endurance. After we were better acquainted we found that close beneath his gentlemanly exterior lay a veritable wild and vagabond nature, a vagrant ancestral strain that nothing could tame. His queer combination of inheritances was the cause of con-

A MEMORY

stant strife in his nature, and the vagrant germ was likely to break out at almost any time into attacks of "spring fever," which would force all ties of the gentlemanly part to the wall and inevitably he would fare forth.

We tried in every way to coax him into contentment and domestic ways, but the very fact that he was under surveillance and obliged to do things, even for our loving satisfaction, was irritating to him and made the "wild strain" chafe under the bondage. He seemed to try to please us as hard as we tried to please him, and appeared grateful and affectionate, but he could not hide that smoldering, hungry yearning in his eyes nor the fact that he was tugging continually at the chains of his restraint, waiting, listening and planning some sort of polite escape, respectability growing more and more irksome every day.

Afterwards, when we came to know his besetting sin more intimately, we gave him credit for manfully putting up a good fight this first time against that vagrant embryo that was stirring an almost irresistible desire in his breast. The migratory instinct grew more insistent day by day, doubtless restrained for a time by a sense in his gentlemanly nature of certain obligations due us for our hospitality, but at last it was too much for his politeness even and with a hasty "good-bye" and a "thank you, ma'am, for your goodness" off he scampered somewhere out where he could be free, and into the uncertainty of his former tramp existence, but with the exquisite joy of liberty speeding his heels.

A MEMORY

We felt very sorry and really quite culpable in not having been able to offer sufficient inducement to hold this tantalizing little vagabond. Although we did not wish him any misfortune, we *did* hope that if adversity should overtake him in the mysterious, hot, irritating madness of his desire, he would remember our hospitable roof, and come straight back to us.

He must have had an unusually good time and turned himself loose recklessly, for it was many months before we saw him again, and when he did appear he had grown to full and magnificent cathood. He came to our door as an undoubted friend, bubbling over with vitality, every fiber in his body, even to his tail, buoyant with pride and action. He was still rather superior in manner and quite sure of himself and his reception, not that he would intrude himself upon us, but if agreeable to all he would "bide a wee."

He looked as if the open road and the chase had afforded him more than a sumptuous living, for although well weathered by his tramp life, he was as chipper as ever and his muscles hard with a healthy well-fed leanness. Evidently, if we wanted this little savage at all we must accept him as a proposition and law unto himself. And we did want him, feeling sure that he was of the right sort, with merely a dash of mystery and adventure about him. He was made more than welcome, and his toes surreptitiously buttered according to ancient superstition, a process said to keep cats from roaming. He graciously settled into the old ways, accepting our love and forgive-

A MEMORY

ness as freely as it was given, and this time was good enough to stay with us for several months.

As week succeeded week and he was still a contented member of our household, showing no signs of going his own way, we felt certain the talisman had worked and grew to be fairly sure of him. We really believed that the fleshpots of servitude had opened his eyes to the folly of his former disreputable ways, and that in pure physical content he would now settle down into the easy berth offered him and the tameness of domesticity.

But it seems that this was only the "gentlemanly part," for the time being having a holiday, and that our assurance was a creation of our own desire and doomed to disappointment. The time came all too surely when he began to show a decided weariness of walls and a diminished appetite for things cooked, perking his ears with a curious, listening look in his dark eyes, as of constant, waiting expectation, listening to something calling from afar. The roaming strain in his blood ever ran true on its glorious course, and it was not long before his days were empty and life too unbearably dull under the ease of our, perhaps too lavish, hospitality. Much to our chagrin he plainly showed that he was weary to death of having to account for days, and being locked up nights.

We recognized the signs and knew that this was one of his periods of utter revolt, when all clogging connection with civilization would prove too galling in comparison with the joys of the

A MEMORY

open, and knowing the nature of the sledge hammer that was pounding in his breast, stood by and watched the struggle with amused interest. We were certain that we had given him the sense of the restfulness of a settled home with its comforts, and were also sure of having gained his gentlemanly gratitude and affection. But "you never can tell," and so we waited and wondered in curious uncertainty as to the outcome.

Summer passed, and it was not until the leaves were smitten with frost and falling scarlet and gold in the autumn woods that Jiminy Christmas' vagabond blood tantalized him into faring forth. The free way in which the cheery chipmunks and the squirrels were scampering among the naked tree-tops, rattling the dry branches and sending a rain of nuts on his great playground, set the wheels of discontent to buzzing so fiercely in his roving nature that it actually hurt him to stay within bounds. We felt that if he were able to resist the merciless torment this time, he would indeed be a warrior worthy of laurel.

In the end the lure of life in the open won; or was it the old militant alley and chummy gutters? But whichever it was, the summons proved too enticing, and so one evening, half-apologetically, as if dragging himself away from an almost overpowering temptation to stay, he rubbed his "Aufwiedershen" about our feet. We watched him fade like a ghost into the surreptitious joy of the blue gloaming, carrying his tail with an air of regret and shame, but resolutely, and quickening his pace with every step, never

A MEMORY

to be seen again until all hope had long been given up.

As the months and finally more than a year passed and no prodigal returned, we feared that he had shaken the dust from his paws and the memory of our home from his mind, forever, and gone the final way of all such vagabonds. We were honestly puzzled over this wild independent streak in his nature, and naturally rather indignant over his lack of appreciation. Still, his next appearance was anxiously waited for and there was never a day that we did not look and hope that out of the mysterious everywhere, somehow, someway, this ungrateful cat would come back to the warm spots in our hearts, and the empty spot on our hearth that were waiting for him.

One lovely morning, in the early spring, on going out on the back porch for a breath of the fresh morning world and a general survey of things blossoming, little did we dream of seeing our renegade. Yet there he was, sitting modestly on the very edge of the farthest corner, as if claiming nothing, nor asserting anything, but actually there, come back to us from the mysterious absence of a whole year.

"And is it you?" was the rather scornful welcome he received.

Naturally the feeble irony of this greeting was lost on him and he gave us a smiling "good-morning," with a "lovely day today" sort of expression, and our pleasure at renewing the acquaintance was as great as the surprise he had given us. We could scarcely believe our eyes,

A MEMORY

but by this time we were getting used to this cat's "dropping in on us" how and when he liked. He was quite self-possessed, making what we considered a polite apology but no unusual fuss, ignoring this huge blank in his record and pretending it was but yesterday that he had stepped out to "look at things." His superb air of having no recollection and being so stolidly calm over it, and having no consciousness of anything to account for, was exasperatingly characteristic. But with all this, there seemed to be at first a questioning, wistful look in his wide-open eyes as they met ours. Not that he was at all humble; it was rather as if he were trying to fathom the depth of his depravity in our estimation: a guilty, uncertain, uneasy, self-conviction, as if feeling his way back into our goodness and esteem.

Although he had made himself tidy, after the manner of cats, he looked as if this intervening year had not been entirely good to him. His disreputable appearance gave proof, that however gentle we had found him in peace, he must be terrible in war, for his glossy fur was soiled and shabby and in a pitiable state of rags and tatters, showing the scars of many a hard-fought battle, but honorable battles and honorable scars we were sure.

Older now, and as one who had experienced hard, his calm eyes held in their dark depths the mystery of many a bandit night under the stars. He was like the "shabby genteel," doing his painful best to make the most of a decidedly disreputable appearance, ignoring all things that were

A MEMORY

even suggestive of a blank page unaccounted for. He was still plucky and sublimely dignified in that impregnable reserve which even our kindness had never been able to penetrate, but there was something gone from his old-time militant buoyancy, and in its place a kind of desperate air, as of one who assumes a bravado of happiness he does not feel.

This time he manifested a decided gratitude for all the good things that came to him. As his hollow skeleton filled out with good and regular food, and his relaxed sinews stiffened, we thought that at last the days of roving and the vagabondage of lusty youth were over and that he had come to a realizing sense of what a comfortable old age would mean. Surely now he would accept a trifling bondage for the sake of peace, rather than yield again to the vague uncertainty of irresponsible freedom and the disastrous results he had plainly experienced. The old love for the prodigal came back and he was reinstated with joy. But alas, the straight and narrow path seemed to have no charms for this incorrigible, and his case seemed hopeless. Just as his hollow curves were filling out into decent plumpness and his thick glossy coat beginning to look like an aristocrat's the symptoms of the inevitable "parting of our ways" were again apparent. It was the usual attack, violent and urgent, leading him to dare and defy all, even death, in following the beckoning call.

It was mortifying to us that he should even occasionally prefer the low company of his alley

A MEMORY

associates, and the shame of being a skulking gutter shadow, dodging abuse, but that he should have these periodical spells of the "inevitable interval," unconscious of any restraint, wandering and living as a tramp for months away from us, his ways and life entirely shrouded in mystery, was too exasperating even for our loving forbearance. In our wrath, we determined that if he went this time from our home, it should be forever. We had lost all patience with his delightful weakness and had at last made up our minds that if he could not be contented to remain this time, we would depose him everlastingly from our hospitality and erase him from our hearts, for we felt that we were wasting our affection and anxious sympathy on false pretenses.

In our high estimation of him, we had given him credit for what was not there, and an appreciation far above what he had proven capable of. We were baffled and perplexed beyond endurance by this strange fascination which seduced him with such passionate persistence, driving him from our protection into great spaces in his life which were a sealed book to us. During all these years of our intermittent friendship, we were never able to solve this riddle. It was as if he heard some compelling challenge, like the sounding notes of the Pied Piper, calling and calling him from that far-off unknown, and try as he would to oppose it, his scandalous legs would eventually force their independence and get him there in spite of a hostile and honorable will. There was something so piteously appealing in the cat's evident

A MEMORY

helplessness to combat these siren summons, which threw him into a white heat of daring, that it finally disarmed our antagonism. Resigned to what we had now found was inevitable we compassionately waited and watched, realizing the fierceness of the strife that was raging in his complex nature, and knowing that he was powerless to thwart it.

This time the battle was a short one, for he had lost the shame of it, and had not the strength or desire to fight it. With no apology but with the steady, brooding look of a thousand defiant devils in his gray eyes, he soon made a hasty escape, the stiff hair lifting eagerly along the ridge of his back as he set out again on the long weary road that was forever drawing him from the narrow path of peace and rectitude. He had evidently sunk very low, even in his own estimation, for our last glimpse of him caught him adroitly dodging a shower of rocks well-aimed by the eternal small boy, ever on the lookout for such targets, as he disappeared over the alley fence.

We gave him up surely this time and mourned him as dead, knowing that the pluck and endurance of youth was long past. His wandering irregular life had done its worst, weakening his one-time rugged frame that was wont to withstand so defiantly, the hardships and privations of a tramp life.

But he was not dead, and we were bound to see him once more from out the No-Where, and to have the satisfaction of knowing that this long trip was his last and his wandering days over.



JIMINY CHRISTMAS, THE FREE SPIRIT
BORN FREE, HE KEPT HIS OWN WANTON
WILL FREE FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO THE END,
LIVING HIS OWN LIFE IN HONOR AND
HONESTY IN AN OUT-DOORS
ALL HIS OWN

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A MEMORY

It was during the wee small hours one silent, frosty night, that I was irresistibly drawn from my dreams and from my bed, and stepping to the window looked out on the sparkling space of what seemed to be the deserted roof, flooded in the unclouded light of the full moon. Quietly and with no sense of abruptness, came stealing on the heavy stillness of the night, a mournful, throaty wail of resignation from out the inky shadow made by the chimney. This desperate cry of the solitary cat sounded almost human, as if, seeing me standing there, and knowing that the icy doom had overtaken him, he just wanted to let me know the desolation of his helplessness. Peering into the shadow, I saw crouched there in a strangely pathetic manner, our wandering Ishmael, keeping a lonely night-watch and waiting patiently in the cold for—God knows what. He seemed dazed and terrified, crouching stiffly and staring about him with wide-open, frightened eyes. He must have known that the darkness was close upon him, for that one beseeching, throaty note, unspeakably human and forlorn, was all his uncomplaining wretchedness uttered.

Answering to my coaxing, he straightened his fast stiffening limbs with an effort and dragged his poor weak body to my compassionate caress. He had changed pitifully during this stay away and was only a shadow of his former self physically. His pride and might were all gone, but he was a stoic still, enduring what he himself seemed to know was death, in silent, uncomplaining misery but with a green spark of terror blazing in his

A MEMORY

fading eyes. I was glad that he had not crawled away to some secret place for the last great struggle alone, but had come to us and to our sympathy in his final need.

I soon had a blazing fire and as he feebly felt its warmth, he made a pathetic effort to tidy his poor matted fur, in which he had always taken such pride, especially in our presence. But even a few licks of his tongue were too much for his failing strength, and he dropped limply to the rug. Once he turned his head wearily to me as if to express his gratitude and as if to say, "How glad I am to be here." Then his body relaxed, the terror faded from his eyes, and that was the end. He had answered the summons for his last journey and gone out into the darkness without even the grace of repentance.

Only a cat! And one of the least commendable of all cats, and one that could not be called, even by his most ardent admirer, a worthy cat. Yet he possessed a personality, if not a soul, glowing with the great American burning impulse of liberty, and he has left a memory, not as a failure, but as one who made good. Born free, he kept his own free will to the end, living his own life in an out-doors all his own, free from enslavement and exultant in his freedom. He asked absolutely nothing of the world, but took what came his way with unassuming composure, rising above the temptation to yield his individuality in serving those he loved, cherishing somewhere in his plucky brain a pre-natal, God-implanted spirit of self-reliance to the end.

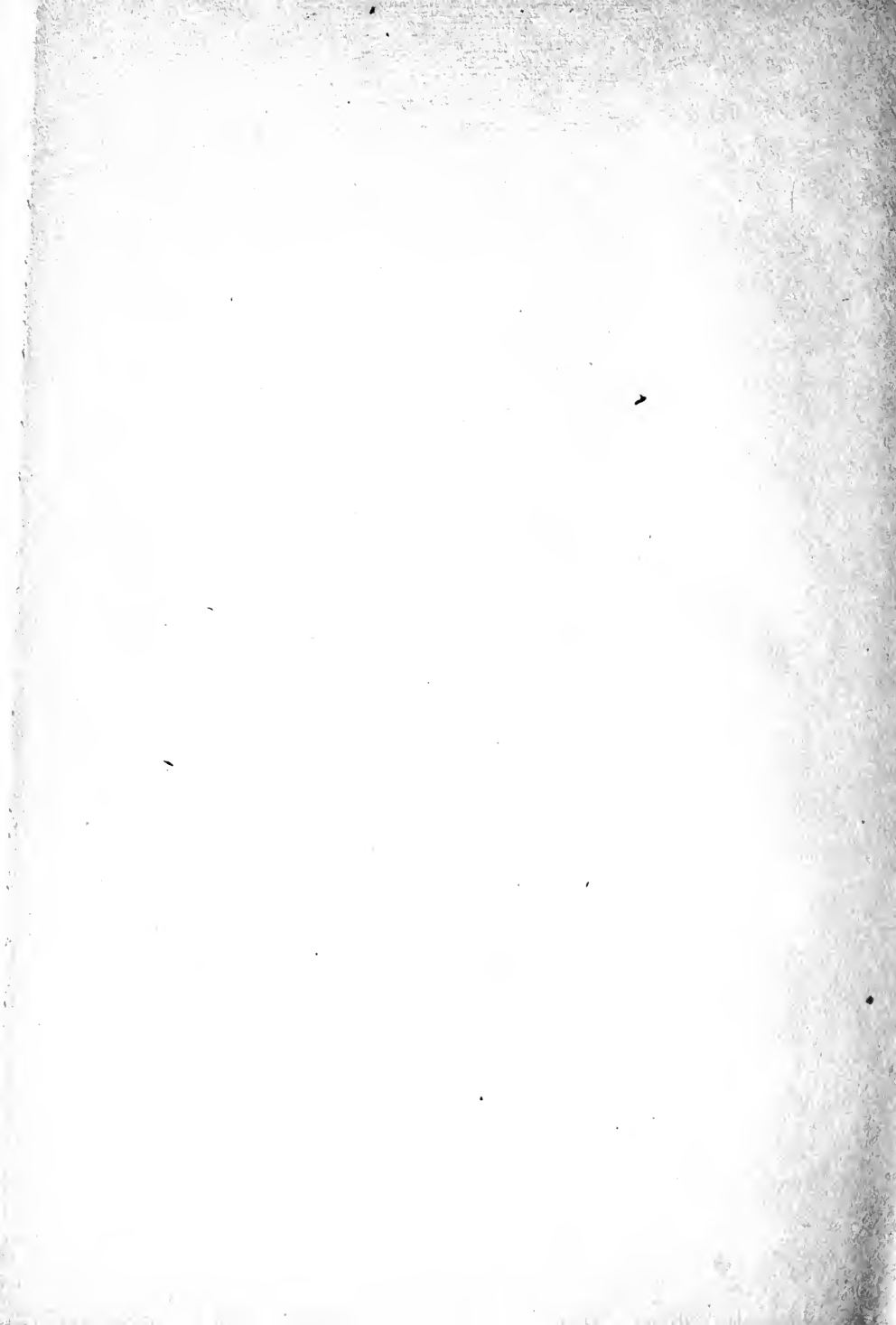
A MEMORY

Is it against all religion that God might perhaps let such a pagan bundle of unrepentance into Somewhere? *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

Is there aught of harm believing
That some newer form receiving,
They may find a wider sphere,
Live a larger life than here!

That the meek appealing eyes
Haunted by strange mysteries,
Find a more extended field,
To new destinies unsealed!

HERE ENDS THE GREAT SMALL CAT, AND
OTHERS, BEING A COLLECTION OF SEVEN
TALES FOR CAT-LOVERS, BY MAY E. SOUTH-
WORTH, THE TYPOGRAPHICAL APPEARANCE
DESIGNED BY JOHN SWART, PUBLISHED BY
PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY AND PRINTED FOR
THEM BY THE TOMOYE PRESS, SAN FRAN-
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